

# Strategic Narratives, Agency and Ontological Security:

The Strategic Negotiation of German Identity  
Narratives around Terrorist Crisis Events  
between 1976 and 2019

By

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# Declaration of Authorship

I, Pauline Sophie Heinrichs, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'P. S. Heinrichs', written over a horizontal line.

Signed: Date: September 2, 2020

# Abstract

Rather than asking what constitutes change or continuity in state identity, this thesis examines how political actors narrate change and continuity to state identity narratives. In doing so, this thesis seeks to contribute to the burgeoning literature in ontological security research. Ontological security research acknowledges the importance of identity narratives carried forward by actors, particularly in the face of uncertainty. However, ontological security research has so far insufficiently addressed the strategic negotiation of the state's ontological status. Ontological security research needs to account for and explicitly theorise agency in the process of identity narrative construction. For an agentic reading of ontological security, this thesis links scholarship in ontological security to scholarship in strategic narratives and develops the concept of movement narratives, i.e. strategic narratives forged by actors to narrate movement to existing identity narrative structures. Drawing on three cases studies and multi-method data examination of terrorist crisis events relevant to German policymakers – the Schleyer kidnapping of 1977, 9/11, and the Berlin truck attack – this thesis examines the political negotiation of Germany's identity narratives around these events. This thesis contends with the assumption in ontological security research that actors seek to smoothen out identity narratives and carry them through time in the face of uncertainty. Instead, German policymakers were able to harness the contestational power of these events to narrate changes to German identity narratives through settling anchors around event groups. When anchors also settle identity narratives around them, agency enables identity narrative negotiation.

**To Marie**

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This thesis seeks to re-engage with the International Relation (IR) scholarship's core concepts of power, identity and change. In doing so, it advances a simple core argument: change and continuity of state identities are dependent on perspective. Rather than asking what constitutes continuity and what constitutes change in state identities, this thesis asks instead where and how political actors narrate changes to state identity. The argument presupposes that continuity and change are subjective. They depend on multiple factors, including perspective, timeframe and location. IR research has been caught up in trying to explain change and continuity (Flockhart 2016), but what actors subjectively understand as change and continuity depend in large parts on where actors formulate and how they express it.

This research thus starts from the assumption that 'for IR to fulfil its promise as a discipline ... we have to bring theory and the world together: use the world as the raw material of theory; and to use theory to help us formulate our study' (Dunne, Hansen and Wight 2013, p. 408). In doing so, it intends to take up Felix Berenskoetter's (2018, p. 814) call for 'Deep Theorizing in International Relations', which he describes as 'the conceptual effort of explaining (inter)action by developing a reading of drives/basic motivations and the ontology of its carrier through an account of the human condition'. It thus engages 'a particular account of how the subject (the political actor) is positioned in social space and time' (Ibid.).

Berenskoetter (Ibid., p. 816) advances the discussion on, and underlines the importance of, the 'spatial and temporal situatedness' of political actors. Such an emphasis mirrors the 'micropolitical perspective' advocated by Ty Solomon and Brent Steele (2017, p.

267), who argue for attention to ‘affect, space and time’. By joining the theoretical calls for a deeper understanding of temporality and spatiality, this thesis proposes that the binary distinction between change and continuity is counterproductive to understanding either. Change and continuity always co-occur through reality and historical time. Instead, the analytical attention should examine the *placement* of movement in time and space. Which areas and issues do actors consider in transformation? Who narrates movement and to which end? In answering these questions, this thesis proposes an examination of movement narratives, conceptualised as strategic narratives specifically crafted to negotiate existing narrative structures.

The observations around change and continuity have broader implications for the study of IR and politics. In this thesis, however, they are applied with the intent to advance the field of ontological security. Ontological security grapples in particular with notions of anxiety, uncertainty and crises, all of which closely resonate with concepts of continuity and change. For example, crises are often understood to instigate change (Widmaier, Blyth and Seabrooke 2007). However, where change and continuity are understood in dichotomous terms and omit strategic narratives that make sense of both, scholars fall short in understanding change and continuity altogether.

To be certain, scholarship in ontological security has acknowledged the importance of narratives. Indeed, the maintenance of a state’s identity narrative is central to the study of ontological security (Steele 2008a; 2008b; Berenskoetter 2014; Subotić 2016; Kinnvall 2004a; 2004b). Although ontological security has acknowledged narratives, it has yet to theorise the link to *strategic* narratives. Instead, ontological security has focused on understanding the processes of ‘identity preservation’ (Browning and Joenniemi 2017, p. 32). In doing so, ontological security has conceptualised the preservation of identity narratives as a guiding principle of state action. The scholarship has thus emphasised the need of political actors to hide inconsistencies and smoothen out these inconsistencies by building coherent and continuous narratives of the *Self*.

However, do political actors always try to hide inconsistencies in state identity narratives? Do political actors of a state always have an interest in securing ontological security? Could it not be possible, instead, that actors have both, an interest in hiding inconsistencies of the *Self* and an interest in “putting them on the table”, even to a degree where it unsettles the stable sense of being in the world? Simply put, narrating the eroded *Self* might sometimes be a narrative strategy for transformation. In examining these questions, this

thesis proposes a conceptual link between ontological security and strategic narrative research.

The contribution of this thesis is, thus, twofold: it contributes to broader discussions on the structure-agency debate in IR by developing a novel theorisation of strategic narratives and critical events; and it advances the scholarship in ontological security by addressing the scholarship's lacking acknowledgement of agency. Ontological security research has so far 'ignored the possibility that political agents may actively target individuals' drive towards the security-of-Being for political purposes' (Homolar and Scholz 2019, p. 346). As a consequence, it appears that the critical scholarship in ontological security is 'trapped in the conservative bias of the framework' (Berenskoetter 2020, p. 284).

The insufficient attention to agency and the strategic narration of ontological security presents a puzzle. If ontological security is interested in the link between identity and security and if it takes 'security-as-being' (Giddens 1991) seriously, then it has to acknowledge that the narratives that sustain 'security-as-being' (Ibid.) are malleable to strategic use. It is the contention of this thesis that the shortcoming partly exists because ontological security research has insufficiently theorised its links to *strategic* narrative research. It has insufficiently entertained the concept of strategic narrative to explore how political actors can draw on the ontological status of the state to achieve short-term political objectives or negotiate long-term identity narratives.

The question that follows is how to conceptualise the interaction between narrative structures and strategic narratives? Alister Miskimmon, Ben O'Loughlin and Laura Roselle (2013) propose a distinction between long-term narratives and short-term narrations. Long-term narratives require an in-depth analysis of extended periods and a more comprehensive incorporation of issues. They resonate with concepts such as identity, long-term strategies and a state's place in an international system. Indeed, long-term narratives are akin to narrative structures, as will be emphasised in the discussion on agency and structure (see Chapter 2, section 2.3). Jelena Subotić (2016, p. 614) has referred to long-term narratives as 'broader narrative templates' or meta-narratives.

In contrast, the narration of short-term episodes focuses more specifically on issues and includes fewer actors and references to the global system. Berenskoetter (2014, p. 279) identifies these narratives as 'derivative narratives'. This thesis is particularly interested in the interaction of long-term narratives and short-term narrations during moments at which political actors question the state's ontological status.

Subotić (2016, p. 614) has proposed one way of looking at the interaction between long-term narratives and short-term narrations by arguing that '[a]t times of great crises the state autobiographical narrative can remain essentially the same, but the policy change brought on by the crisis is narratively explained by activating some elements of the broader narrative template and deactivating others'. Subotić (Ibid., p. 615) does not focus on 'specific narratives of individual events', but on 'how multiple individual historical narratives can merge into one, larger, narrative, which then becomes a frame for understanding both the past and the present in a simplified, schematic and linear fashion'.

To be sure, the approach suggested by Subotić is helpful because it implicitly recognises that there is agency in the process of activating and deactivating elements of narrative structures. It is certainly possible that the short-term contextualisation of existing narratives drives a policy but has no bearing on the state's identity narrative. Short-term narratives can be contextual and designed so that they only apply to a specific situation at a given moment in time. However, the acknowledgement of the activation and deactivation of elements, does not negate that ontological security research also needs to recognise when and how short-term narrations have bearings on 'broader narrative templates' (Subotić 2016, p. 614), mainly where they serve strategic narrations around events.

It follows that an analysis of the strategic narration of the state's ontological status must focus specifically on the interaction of short-term narrations and long-term narrative structures. A focus on the interaction is not only significant for understanding the processes underlying the creation of historical narratives, but also for how political actors deploy strategic narratives around events and how they enable agency. The interaction becomes particularly relevant for the negotiation of state identity through 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) that relate events, policies and a state's identity. If state identity narratives rest part of their explanatory power on the establishment of a biographical narrative, then short-term event narrations need to make sense of an event by drawing on 'broader narrative templates' (Subotić 2016, p. 614). At the same time, short-term event narrations that strategically apply elements of an identity narrative to an event might also have an effect on the identity narrative.

Acknowledging this interaction also means that the distinction between long-term narratives and short-term narrations is difficult to uphold and that they are mutually constitutive. Instead, it is crucial to pay attention to where change and transformation are placed and verbalised. Where both change and continuity always occur at the same time, it is important to analyse where political actors narrate change and continuity. From this

perspective, it is essential to examine the content and interaction of ‘derivative narratives’ (Berenskoetter 2014, p. 279) (short-term narrations) with meta-narratives (long-term narrative structures). For example, a meta-narrative of a social welfare state reveals little about how actors use the narrative strategically or what the narrative means for the narrating actor. In this way, short-term narrations can provide meaning to long-term narratives. At the same time, long-term narratives can be activated to help and support short-term narrations. This interaction is best witnessed during critical events. As Robin Wagner-Pacifici (2017, p. 70) aptly puts it:

From ground to rupture and from rupture to figuration, events emerge and take shape. Shock and incomprehension are quickly “colonized” by the political semiotic work of social and political agents and institutions, though recognition and coherence are always provisional, always ongoing ... [We have] seen how hard it is (but also how important) to focus on the rupture itself. Images, concepts, judgments, and trajectories rush in to fill the gap between a hand raised or a figure poised, and the following movement or gesture that saves or damns; ... There are handoffs from singularities to series and back again. The flows and forms of events resonate from rupture as historical subjects engage in representational, performative, and demonstrative interactions at every step.

Wagner-Pacifici acknowledges that the analysis of short-term event narrations does not neglect the study of historical narratives. Instead, the moment of rupture links historically embedded narratives, narrative structures and short-term narrations. The reciprocal exchange between singularities and series becomes visible and compounded during the event. It is here that the narration of a state’s ontological status becomes a tool that political actors can deploy. The critical event provides the compounded space in which the interaction between short-term narrations and long-term narratives becomes particularly visible.

This thesis draws on agentic constructivism as the theoretical framework for understanding and explaining the interaction between long-term narratives and short-term narrations. It, therefore, is a constructivist work. Unlike structural constructivism, however, this thesis concurs with Katrin Sikkink (2011, p. 237) who argues that ‘agentic constructivism is concerned with how agents – that is real people and organisations – promote new ideas and practices’ and that understanding their interests means to ‘unpack the state and consider how context and ideas shape the way that different actors interpret their interests’. Here, ‘the interests of actors don’t exist in the abstract but change over time in relation to the changing institutional and ideational context in which they are operating’ (Ibid.). While Sikkink’s research focuses on changes in individual accountability and prosecution of state leaders in violation of human rights, she raises an important point. Despite the constructivist commitment to unpacking the state’s black box, and the post-structural commitment to

deconstructing meaning, structures too often take analytical priority over explaining agent-made change.

Even Sikkink, albeit promoting an agentic constructivist approach, paradoxically prioritises structures as the explanatory driver for behavioural change. This problem becomes evident when she argues that actors ‘change over time in relation to the changing institutional and ideational context’ (Sikkink 2011, p. 237). In theory, this thesis is in line with Sikkink’s argument, but agentic constructivism needs to be more explicit about who it is that changes institutional and ideational contexts. Actors are not merely changed by ideational and institutional context; they can be agents of that change. Instead, this thesis considers institutional and ideational changes as resting on the ability of actors to instigate such changes through strategic narrative work.

To be sure, context and events change, and processes and narratives are highly interconnected. Yet, this thesis argues that scholars have to be more careful in understanding how a state’s identity is negotiated during crisis events. Further, research has to be more analytically explicit about how strategic narratives write these events into a state’s national biography. In doing so, this research suggests that the strategic narration of how an event affects a state’s ontological status provides a tool for political actors to link event narrations (short-term) and identity narratives (long-term).

This is not to imply that all events inherit or are made to inherit this quality. Neither does this thesis suggest that a state’s identity is only produced by the narration of political events. State identities are highly complex. It is, therefore, beyond the scope of this thesis and beside the point to see event narrations as the only causal explanation for how collective identities are constituted. This thesis instead seeks to explore *one* aspect of identity transformation and renegotiation, so far insufficiently examined in the field of strategic narratives and IR.

In exploring identity transformation through an agentic lens, this thesis follows Berenskoetter’s (2020, p. 279) contention that the agency dilemma in ontological security research can be approached from two different perspectives: (1) by analytically demonstrating the ‘embrace’ of anxiety by actors and the possibility of change in the creativity surrounding this ‘embrace’ (Ibid.), or (2) ‘to entertain an agency that embraces ontological *insecurity* and, thus, the incomplete nature of being’ which ‘would require balancing the yearning for certainty with a penchant for curiosity’ (Ibid., p. 288, italics in original). In testing the ‘radical agency’ that explores this ‘penchant for curiosity’, this thesis argues that ontological security scholarship can free itself from the trap of ill-recognised ‘emancipatory agency’ (Ibid.) that

has limited the scholarship's ability to account for and examine change. Change, as in line with the contention of this thesis, is always the narration of change.

For Berenskoetter (Ibid., p. 274, italics in original), 'conceptions of agency cannot be derived from *being* ontologically secure, but are expressed in the attempt to *become* ontologically secure'. Berenskoetter's intervention links agency and its potential for writing identity narratives as derived from the need to become ontologically secure in 'critical situations' (Ejdus 2020, p. 2). However, even with a commitment to granting analytical space to agency in ontological security research, Berenskoetter's focus rests on the assumption that actors always seek ontological stability, rather than using ontological insecurity to narrate changes to guiding identity narrative commitments.

It follows that this research is principally interested in understanding how actors narrate movement and negotiate identity narratives by making sense of events as they unfold. Movement narratives are strategic narratives forged by actors to narrate movement to existing identity narrative structures. Movement narratives are, therefore, an expression of agency in the negotiation of identity narratives. Agentic movement is the attempt to move identity narrative structures through strategic narratives. This thesis conceptualises three possible movements that speak to agency in narrative identity negotiation: reiteration, restoration and redescription.

The story of **reiteration** describes how an identity narrative came to be, what it is, and why it is worth carrying into the future. In doing so, an actor outlines a problem and tells a story about how that problem enforces the need to reiterate a state identity narrative. The reiterative movement reflects in part Berenskoetter's (2020, pp. 282-283) concept of 'muted agency', i.e. an 'agency that fits into, functions within, and sustains existing mechanisms'. More broadly, this type of agency is reflected in ontological security's core notion of the need to sustain identity narratives, by which agents incorporate uncertainties and crises into existing narrative structures, not only to alleviate the source of anxiety but also to strengthen existing identity narratives.

The movement narrative of **restoration** tells a story about how an identity narrative once was, why it is better than the current identity narrative (that other actors pursue) and how to re-establish such an identity narrative in the future. The problem is narrated as either necessitating restoration or as a problem inherent to the current identity narrative. This type of agency resonates closely with populist narratives (Moffitt 2016), the narration of loss (Browning 2019), agency through the production of crises (Hay 1996) and narratives on the re-establishment of order.

The movement narrative of **redescription** tells a story about how an identity narrative came about, why it was viable until now and why it needs replacing. A crisis here can be taken as the new context or as instigating the need to reinvent a state identity narrative. This type of agency mirrors Berenskoetter's (2020, p. 282) two categories of agency; that of 'creative-constitutive agency' and 'emancipatory agency' both of which can be found in restorative movement narratives as well. For Berenskoetter (Ibid.) 'creative-constitutive agency ... comes to the fore in reaction to an event that undermines existing mechanism and thereby destabilizes conceptions of being in time, in turn, generating demand for the creation of (new) mechanisms'. To be sure, a 'creative-constitutive agency' (Ibid.) is a crucial aspect of movement through redescription. However, Berenskoetter's (Ibid.) conceptualisation still rests too explicitly on the exogenous nature of a shock, rather than the agency that co-constructs such shock so it can serve to redescribe identity narratives.

The three types of agentic movement proposed here (reiteration, restoration, and redescription) are all able to reflect different degrees of agency from milder to radical expressions of agency, the latter breaking with everything that is known as, for example, found in revolutions. However, even revolutions as moments of radical agency might negotiate identity narratives through restorative movement narratives, or might negotiate identity narratives in different, competing ways. For example, in writing on the Iranian Revolution of 1979, Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi (2016, p. 189) argues that Foucault examined the Iranian Revolution through a defence of 'political spirituality' and 'in praise of the transformative power of the revolution'. Notwithstanding the revolutionaries' successful narratives on the restoration of national power and Islamic theocracy (restorative movement narratives), the agency inherent to the 'political spirituality' (Ibid.) empowered radical agency and transformation.

This thesis argues that at the moment at which the event punctuates and unsettles structures, there is potential for the (re)configuration of state identity through anchoring "unsettledness" around 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) – be it by substantiating existing, or constructing new ones. 'Traumatic events such as wars or other political disasters are particularly useful windows of opportunity' (Subotić, 2016, p. 616) because they are commonly interpreted as necessitating change (Widmaier, Blyth and Seabrooke 2007, p. 748).

This thesis thus contends that moments of radical agency are particularly visible during 'critical situations' (Ejdus 2020, p. 2). Filip Ejdus (Ibid., italics in original), for example, defines critical events and their underlying anxiety as 'bringing into the realm of

discursive consciousness four fundamental questions related to *existence, finitude, relations and autobiography*. Ejdus (Ibid.) clarifies that '[i]n some cases, a critical situation might be mild and involve only one fundamental question, while in others ontological crises will be full-blown and involve all four of them'. More prominent expressions of anxiety can also be that of shame, guilt or fear, but they are not limited to either.

This thesis hypothesises that the questions posed to the *Self* during these situations enable agency. Certain events – contingent on how they can strategically serve this function – drive anxiety and the threat to an identity narrative. An identity narrative 'implicates the self within the understanding of those events' (Steele 2008a, p. 72). Where actors seek to establish the causal drivers of events and where they link them to solutions, narrative analysis can analytically grasp anxiety and agency. Where anxiety is present, actors have a variety of means at their disposal to express it. Anxiety thus presents itself in manifold ways. How anxiety is expressed differs from actor to actor and the strategic interest attached to the negotiation of the state's ontological status.

In focusing on crisis events, this research places emphasis on the significance of trauma and loss (Innes and Steele 2013), specifically terrorist crisis events. Whilst Berenskoetter (2014, pp. 271-272) agrees that theoretically, any event could be written into a state's national biography, it is most likely trauma and crises that remain in a collective's memory. Where strategic narrative research is beginning to answer how some events are narrated to become a significant part of a state identity narrative (Subotić 2016), research has not focused sufficiently on the domestic processes underlying such a narration. Scholars have yet to understand by which means some events form part of a state identity narrative, and by which some do not, especially where they constitute a moment for agency in the process of identity narrative negotiation.

In linking agency and the significance of violent events for identity negotiation processes, this research draws on the concept of 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561). In developing the concept of 'discursive anchors', Alexandra Homolar and Pablo A. Rodríguez-Merino (2019, p. 575) argue that 'how audiences comprehend violence, while linked to the materiality of the event, depends on how it is framed and whether the narrative contains discursive anchors that push our sense-making this way' and 'thereby setting the boundaries of political possibility'. This research adds that where events are settled through either new 'discursive anchors' (Ibid., p. 561) or substantiate existing ones, political actors not only enable what is politically possible but they inscribe identity narrative commitments around them. Where 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.) settle, so do

the identity narrative commitments. Simply put, ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) are a means to settle the anxiety posed to identity narrative commitments by a ‘critical situation’ (Ejdus 2020, p. 2). This thesis explores the process by which they do.

While ‘rhetorical choices may not necessarily be the result of deliberate planning or extensive strategic calculation, they nonetheless signal political agency’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 567). This thesis is specifically interested in asking how political actors pursue the possibility of agency. Further, this thesis asks how actors enable agency through the negotiation of state identity narrative commitments and the state’s ontological status around crisis events.

In examining the process of identity narrative negotiations around critical events, this thesis deploys a critical extended case study methodology (Lai and Roccu 2019) and narrative analysis in IR (Suganami 2008; Wibben 2011; Harel-Shalev and Daphna-Tekoah 2016). It examines three empirical cases of terrorist attacks that constituted critical events for German policymakers with implications for German state identity narratives: the Schleyer kidnapping of 1977; 9/11; and the Berlin truck attack of 2016. The primary dataset consists of 581 parliamentary debates in the legislative period during and after each event. In drawing on the findings of the narrative analysis of the initial dataset, this thesis substantiates, corroborates and supplements each case study with secondary data to account for context and to trace how narratives travel through the narrative cycle of formation, projection and reception (Miskimmon, O’Loughlin and Roselle 2013, pp. 8-12).

Four analytical markers guide the analysis of parliamentary debates: (1) Anxiety, (2) Temporality, (3) Agency, and (4) Identity narrative negotiation. This thesis argues that where these analytical markers are present, they link an actor’s identity narrative negotiation around ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) of ‘critical situations’ (Ejdus 2020, p. 2). Each of the analytical markers will be presented for each case study specifically and brought together in a comparative analysis in the conclusion of this thesis (Chapter 7).

The presentation of findings in each case study will follow a similar structure along the narrative cycle of formation, projection and reception, as proposed by Miskimmon, O’Loughlin and Roselle (2013). However, the structure in each case study also adapts and adjusts flexibly to the specific contextual demands of each case, which is specifically required for the descriptions of prevalent media ecologies (Awan, Hoskins and O’Loughlin 2011; Constantinou, Richmond and Watson 2008; Jackson 2019) and narrative reception. The structure of this thesis intentionally avoids a chronological reading of each event and its

sensemaking. Because events are unbounded and relational, and because they leave traces through time, a chronological approach hinders the focus on significant themes and elements of the narrative cycle.

Critically, all three elements of the narrative cycle interact at all times and are difficult to dissect, especially in the latter two case studies on 9/11 (Chapters 5) and the Berlin truck attack (Chapter 6) owing to the nature of more participatory media ecologies. A chronological presentation of findings, however, would have been ill-suited to examine the relational nature and interaction of narratives as they unfold. It would have further presumed that there is a logical chronological order to how events are made sense of through time. In addition, the interaction of short-term narrations and long-term narrative structures requires a more flexible accommodation of analytical categories that go beyond a chronological order.

It follows that a presentation of findings along the narrative cycle is better suited to outline methodological and analytical implications because chronologies are never self-evident (White 1978). The narrative cycle, therefore, reflects the reflexive and multi-method approach employed in this thesis more adequately. Nevertheless, where new contexts require additional theoretical input – especially for understanding the media ecology of each case – the chapters reflexively add theorisations where needed. Each empirical chapter also summarises the findings along the analytical markers outlined in the methodological part of this thesis (Chapter 3).

In developing the central arguments made in this thesis, **Chapter 2** looks specifically at the theoretical background and the existing literature in the field of ontological security and strategic narratives to advance an agentic reading of critical events. Specifically, this chapter examines how a narrative reading of events can advance discussions around agency and structure. Chapter 2 further develops the theoretical toolkit for understanding agency inherent to the process of setting and substantiating ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561).

**Chapter 3** discusses how a critical and extended case study methodology and narrative analysis can operationalise research on identity narrative negotiation. It further reflects on the data selection process for the initial dataset and secondary data for each case study specifically. This chapter also addresses methodological implications of a critical and interpretative approach by discussing the methodological limitations of this research.

**Chapter 4** discusses the first empirical case study; the Schleyer kidnapping of 1977. It shows that political actors ‘discursively anchor[ed]’ (Ibid.) domestic terrorism from the political left to the strong state and militant democracy. At the same time, the anxiety around

the events and West Germany's already ontologically insecure status was a powerful resource for both the government and the opposition to explore the possibility of identity narrative negotiation. In linking the strength of the state to strict narratives on moral boundaries and deviance, political actors also constructed 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.) of counterterrorism as rooted in a law-abiding society and a strong state response. However, anchoring terrorism and counterterrorism through the negotiation of identity narratives did not, despite the pervasiveness of anchors, solve the uncertainty or anxiety around West German identity.

**Chapter 5** discusses 9/11 and its significance for German identity narrative negotiation. Principally, it argues that particularly the government was able to exert 'creative-constitutive agency' (Berenskoetter 2020, p. 282) around 9/11 by advancing narratives of German maturity and self-confidence. The narratives enabled a broader scope of possibility for German foreign policy by narrating movement to identity narrative structures. In terms of 'discursive[ly] anchor[ing]' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) terrorism, the temporal narratives on rupture and the new threat of international terrorism enabled setting new 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.) around international terrorism. These 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.) specified the attacks as attacks against civilisation and sought to make sense of the third totalitarian challenge both of which closely linked to the redescription of German responsibility in a newly narrated international order.

**Chapter 6** discusses the Berlin truck attack of 2016. It principally argues that the event did not provide sufficient space for the negotiation of German identity narratives. Where the event was 'emplotted' (White 1997, p. 392) into other long-term narratives, its meaning submerged into the meaning of these long-term narratives. In this way, the event served to substantiate existing 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around Islamist-extremist terrorism. More broadly, this chapter argues that the event was pulled apart by its use as evidence for other long-term narratives in an environment of competing domestic and international crises.

**Chapter 7** is the conclusion of this thesis and brings together a discussion of the analytical markers of (1) Anxiety, (2) Temporality, (3) Agency, and (4) Identity Narrative Negotiation. Based on the empirical chapters, the conclusion discusses the conditions necessary for identity narrative negotiation around critical events. It principally summarises the finding of this thesis that where an event is narrated dominantly as a singularity, political actors enable setting new anchors as a means to settle the uncertainty inherent to the singularity of a 'critical situation' (Ejdus 2020, p. 2). In doing so, the narration of rupture and singularity enable 'creative-constitutive agency' (Berenskoetter 2020, p. 282) and are a

powerful means to narrate changes to long-term identity narrative commitments through short-term event narrations. The conclusion further disentangles each analytical marker and proposes a summary through a refined framework of each analytical marker to enable future research. The conclusion also addresses areas for further research, especially in showing that the theoretical groundwork in this thesis also applies to events that are not terrorist attacks.

There is power in the meaning-making and production of critical events, and this power is rooted in the agency of political actors to provide sense to what an event means for a collective's identity. In an age in which many populist voices have resurfaced and gained increasing popularity, the power inherent to making sense of critical events has incredible political purchase and significance. It is the hope that this thesis contributes to a better understanding not only of the power inherent to identity narrative negotiation, but also the responsibility inherent to political agency. Long from the 'End of International Relations theory' (Dunne, Hansen and Wight 2013), this thesis thus posits that the field of IR has never been more important. In committing to the importance of IR research, this thesis also argues, however, that scholars need to re-engage with the field's core concepts, especially to enable a better analytical grasp of agency. This grasp – such is the contention of this thesis – is facilitated by a commitment to 'deep theorizing' (Berenskoetter 2018). This thesis is a contribution to this commitment.

# Chapter 2

## Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Introduction

The theoretical chapter principally argues that the study of strategic narratives can provide crucial answers to questions ontological security has so far insufficiently addressed, namely the dichotomous reading of continuity and change and a lack of accounting for agency. By linking the scholarship in ontological security to strategic narratives, the discussion puts the central structure-agency debate in International Relations (IR) research in focus. In this thesis, agency is the ability to craft language that links to action within the confines of what is discursively available to shift what is discursively possible. The argument goes further in proposing that many of the difficulties scholars run into when conceptualising agency arise because it is difficult to do so without making use of the concept of strategic narratives.

The theorisation of state identity and identity narratives will build on an agentic reading of the sensemaking of reality. The theorisation in this thesis does not seek to argue either for or against an essence of identity. Instead, it argues that whichever way identity is understood (either by a group or an individual), actors require narratives to make sense of and communicate said identity (see Atkins and Mackenzie eds. 2008; Chernobrov 2016; Polletta and Jasper 2001). In line with Brent Steele (2010, p. 77), this chapter establishes that irrespective of the complex and multi-layered nature of identity, identity narratives ‘most closely approximate the identity commitments of a given group’. However, in this research, these ‘identity commitments’ (Ibid.) are conceptualised to be more flexible than ontological security research currently allows. This thesis argues that the link between ontological

security and strategic narratives can explore the possibility of agency in the reiteration, restoration or redescription of identity narratives during crisis events.

It follows that the argument rests on an agentic reading of ‘critical situations’ (Ejdus 2020, p. 2). It is the contention of this thesis that events crucially bind agency, anxiety and temporality and reveal agency where actors seek to forge meaning of these situations. The assumption is that state identity as constructed and contested narratives imply that it is in the friction of experience and expectation that scholars can find and analytically grasp agency. Where better to search for friction than in what is considered a critical event? There is agency in making sense of what constitutes a rupture and what does not, and there is agency ‘in competing interpretations’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 575) of critical events. Not all events logically present themselves as ruptures or as significant to state identity narratives; they have to be accompanied by a narrative process that establishes the event as such, and that clarifies why, to what, and for whom the event constitutes a rupture.

The chapter will also argue that scholarship in IR needs to address the striking lack of event theorisations in IR. In understanding strategic narratives as a means to unify an event’s ‘shreds of existence’ (Farge 2007, p. 29), Robin Wagner-Pacifici’s (2017) sociological research on event temporality provides a comprehensive framework. Whilst an event might shatter perceptions and meaning in one area, it might not in others. Whilst it might shatter perceptions and meaning for some people, it might not for others. The narratives that make sense of rupture tie to identity narratives and to how events can become ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) that ‘prime us to routinely evaluate new information within familiar frames’ (Ibid., p. 564). This chapter will conclude by arguing that how events become linked to identity narrative negotiations will crucially set forth readings of events in the future and thus provide a compounded space for agency in the meaning-making of such events.

## 2.2. Ontological Security

Drawing on the work by sociologist Anthony Giddens (1984; 1991), ontological security regards the security of being as enacted through a coherent narrative of the *Self*. The coherent narrative of the *Self* is defined as story of stories through which the *Self* is ‘reflexively understood’ (Giddens 1991, p. 244). In extrapolating this concept to state actors, IR scholarship in ontological security (Browning 2016; Ejdus 2018; Kinnvall 2004a; 2007; Kinnvall and Mitzen 2017; Mitzen 2006a; Steele 2008a) suggests that the ‘attention to the

psychological sensibilities of political actors offers a fruitful alternative to the realist emphasis on physical security as the primary concern' (Berenskoetter 2020, p. 273). The analytical attention in ontological security research shifts to mechanisms of how, to which end and where state actors can achieve and maintain 'cognitive stability' (Mitzen 2006a, p. 345). In direct dialogue with securitisation theory, Jeff Huysman's (2011), for example, looks at the importance of routines in processes that seek such cognitive stability (see also Browning 2018a; McSweeney 1999; Steele 2019). Others have looked at the establishment of national biographies (Berenskoetter 2014). The scholarship in ontological security has further explored links to populism (Steele and Homolar 2019), memory and the historicity of remembrance (Mitzen 2018; Subotić 2018), trauma (Innes and Steele 2013; Kinnvall 2004b), migration (Gazit 2019) and spatiality (Ejdus 2017). Scholars have also investigated the dialogue between ontological security and concepts such as friendship (Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010), affect and emotions (Innes 2017; Solomon 2018).

Whilst approaches to ontological security differ, the scholarship acknowledges the importance of narratives in the process of understanding and telling the story of the *Self* (see Berenskoetter 2014; Kinnvall 2004a; Steele 2008a; Subotić 2016). A narrative of the *Self* 'smoothens out and provides coherence to the active Self' (Steele 2010, p. 36). The maintenance of coherency is especially significant when these narratives accompany action and seek to incorporate uncertainties and friction. The focus in this thesis, however, is not on the interaction of states but the relevance of identity narrative negotiation within a given state, particularly during what Filip Ejdus (2020, p. 2) considers 'critical situations'.

Where crises, such as terrorist attacks, question notions of the 'idealized Self' (Steele 2010, p. 38), it is crucial to understand how the *Self* processes the emotional upheaval and 'imaginative rupture' (Ibid.). In the experience of the terrorist attack and its politicisation, these 'imaginative ruptures' are crucial:

A terrorist attack, for instance, creates a hole in the imaginative stratum by challenging the smooth, imagined notion of power (control over one's own image). It also manifests extreme psychological and social-psychological emotions (fear, sadness, melancholy, and, of course, anger), and it most assuredly impacts the rhythms or routines of daily existence, such as travel. In this way, a terrorist attack impacts aesthetic power much more abruptly than the physical consequences it engenders.

(Ibid.)

Where 'critical situations' (Ejdus 2020, p. 2) pose questions to the *Self*, they also stir a sense of anxiety for the 'aesthetic' (Steele 2010) *Self*, that is, they produce 'a sense of uncertainty or unease over something that cannot quite be identified' and it 'impacts upon the way we navigate the world' (Steele and Homolar 2019, p. 215). As ontological security research

maintains, agents seek to counter this anxiety by aiming to incorporate ruptures into existing identity narratives. Anxiety also drives the need for routine practices and ‘anxiety controlling mechanisms’ (Giddens 1984, p. 50; see also Berenskoetter 2020; Kinnvall, Manners and Mitzen 2018), mostly with the objective to stabilise the given identity commitments of the *Self*.

However, will political actors always try to hide inconsistencies in narrative biographies? Could it not be possible instead that actors can have both: an interest in hiding inconsistencies of the *Self* and an interest in “putting them to the table”, even to a degree where it unsettles the stable sense of being in the world? Simply put, narrating the eroded *Self* might sometimes be a powerful narrative strategy for transformation or for setting ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) that inscribe redescriptions of the *Self* through critical events. Do political actors of a state, always have an interest in securing ontological security? Even so, how do they strategically narrate ontological security at the moment of crisis events; to which effect and end?

The core assumption of coherency and stability ontological research has invited the scholarship’s most forceful critiques: ‘The aspiration to ontological security, to contiguous and stable narratives of selfhood, can (violently) obscure the ways in which such narratives are themselves implicated in power relations’ (Rossdale 2015, p. 369). However, Chris Rossdale’s (Ibid.) critique is not an inherent invalidation of the theory, but rather a call to revise the underlying core assumptions of the ontological security framework. This thesis argues that a link between ontological security and strategic narratives can better examine the strategic stakes inherent to the negotiation of identity narratives around unfolding events. The contention of this thesis is in line with Felix Berenskoetter (2020, p. 283), who argues that:

The reason for neglecting emancipatory agency is not simply due to an analytical preference for explaining the persistence of particular orders or forms of interaction. Rather, it is because the framework has made the human need for stability its core assumption, which renders it ill-suited for explaining radical change.

This thesis concurs with Berenskoetter that the framework of ontological security currently ill-addresses ‘emancipatory agency’ (Ibid.) because it rests on the assumption that actors always seek ontological security and stability. This study adds, however, that the framework is ill-suited because change and continuity are trapped in a material and non-narrative reading in the ontological security framework.

Alexandra Homolar and Ronny Scholz (2019) have started to address this problem, but they have not fully explored the link to strategic narrative research. The establishment of this link is necessary because strategic narrative research theorises on, and pertinently speaks

to, agency (Miskimmon, O’Loughlin and Roselle eds. 2017). It is thus well equipped to make sense of the strategic erosion of a state’s ontological status and identity narrative negotiation through critical events.

## 2.3. What are Strategic Narratives?

Narratives thrive on the encounter of the friction between the known and the unknown. They provide meaning to reality by representing sequences of events, identities and objectives in a coherent storyline. As Hayden White (1978, pp. 83-84, italics in original) points out:

I would argue, histories gain part of their explanatory effect by their success in making stories out of *mere* chronicles, and stories in turn are made out of chronicles by an operation which I have elsewhere called “emplotment” ... The events are *made* into a story by the suppression or subordination of certain [elements] of them and highlighting of others, by characterization, motific repetition, variation in tone and point of view, alternative descriptive strategies, and the like – in short, all of the techniques that we would normally expect to find in the emplotment of a novel or a play.

Narratives are therefore forged plotlines. They bind actors, events, problems, tools, and behaviour and objectives in meaningful ways. Where narratives are relevant for the ‘strategic social construction’ (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, p. 888) of political and social life, they become a powerful tool for political actors. From this viewpoint, language is constitutive of political action (Fierke 2002; Milliken 1999). More generally, narratives ‘play a central role in constructing and symbolizing experienced reality at the level of both sensegiving and sensemaking’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 563). Cognitively, ‘narratives enable us to both capture the many complex relationships and events that are integral to our everyday lives and to make sense of seemingly unconnected phenomena’ (Ibid.; see also Miskimmon, O’Loughlin and Roselle 2013, p. 5).

Reflecting on the inherent susceptibility to strategic use, the concept of *strategic* narrative emphasises the agentic power inherent to strategic narratives. When used strategically to achieve political ends and objectives, narratives become a crucial tool to ‘[make] action possible, allowing for some practices and policies, while foreclosing possibility for others’ (Subotić 2016, p. 613). In doing so, strategic narratives affect the “real world”. They designate action and offer possible solutions to the problem(s) outlined.

For example, a state identity narrative on military strength will have consequences for the acceptance of troop deployment. Equally, a “Make America Great Again” narrative will have consequences for how actors view and enact policies and political action. They are not merely reactions to changing realities. They are strategic products that seek to organise and

structure reality. In other words, the tools used to make sense of reality in everyday life are susceptible to strategic use. They influence political behaviour and action and ‘because state agents “narrate” about the nation-state, they create potential Selves that that nation-state seeks to realize through its policies’ (Steele 2010, p. 3). Steele (2017, p. 112) further suggests:

There is an internal vulnerability arising from aesthetic power, which comes from the need to see it in action ... Although the decision has the stated intention of creating a more secure environment for the nation, it instead leads to pockets of vulnerability, which arise because power, which had been operating “in the dark”, becomes revealed in decisive action. I also posit that such aesthetic insecurity holds the keys towards a re-formation of the Self especially in a democracy.

The realisation of the ‘aesthetic’ (Steele 2010) *Self* through policies links closely to strategic narratives that enable policy options and choices. They can be used to expand the scope of action for the ‘aesthetic’ (Ibid.) *Self* or to justify why some policies are more reflective of the *Self* than others. Crucially, the enactment of the ‘aesthetic’ (Ibid.) *Self* carries its own narrativity and policies and acts can sometimes contradict the narratives that sought to enable these practices in the first place.

Notwithstanding the power inherent to strategic narratives, scholars have to be careful to provide mono-causal narrative explanations because the ‘capacity, even ... potential, for guiding and controlling conduct of strategic narratives remains tenuous’ (Price 2012, p. 25). It is, therefore, ‘difficult to evaluate what disciplining power can be attributed to the narrative itself, as compared to the power structures that underlie it’ (Ibid.). It is undoubtedly challenging to establish causality between action and narrative. It is even more difficult to establish causality between the legitimacy of a given actor and narrative work. However, narrative work is a reflection of the complexity of the world, and the establishment of a mono-causal link between narrative and action is not the driving objective for researching strategic narratives. Rather than asking whether a narrative causes action, scholars should focus on how political actors narrate action and to which end for the ‘re-formation’ (Steele 2017, p. 112) of the *Self*.

To this point, Michelle Bentley (2018, p. 334) argues that strategic narratives are a ‘conscious product, operationalised to secure a specified political purpose or benefit’. The core of Bentley’s argument is that strategic narratives are a means to push for the achievement of political objectives. In other words: narratives are ‘manipulated for political purposes’ (Subotić 2016, p. 611). Yet, the acknowledgement that actors manipulate strategic narratives does not undermine the need to examine their influence.

Is it possible to analytically uncover manipulative intent? Ronald Krebs and Patrick Thaddeus Jackson (2007, p. 36) for example caution that scholars should ‘avoid centering

causal accounts on unanswerable questions about actors' true motives'. While it may be impossible to uncover 'true' (Ibid.) intentions because intentions arise from a complex interaction of psychological and social factors, it is still possible to acknowledge that actors can express intent. It follows that scholars can examine intent, where actors choose to express it through speech, gestures and actions. The examination of this expression is critical to understanding political behaviour and action. To this point, Alister Miskimmon, Ben O'Loughlin and Laura Roselle (2013, p. 5) argue:

Strategic narratives are representations of a sequence of events and identities, a communicative tool through which political actors – usually elites – attempt to give determined meaning to past, present, and future in order to achieve a political objective. Critically, strategic narratives integrate interests and goals – they articulate end states and suggest how to get there.

Strategic narratives are an essential tool for 'histories to gain part of their explanatory effect' (White 1978, p. 83). They provide a tool to rationalise, and reason for, specific action and behaviour in the present and to envision futures. In this process, strategic narratives serve as a means to structure events as they unfold into existing narrative structures. Political actors make strategic choices within a dense and narratively structured environment. This environment establishes norms, preferences and interests. Strategic narratives, therefore, are tools to create new and change existing structures, but narratives are equally structures in themselves.

When strategic narratives become a 'structure through which sense is achieved' (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin and Roselle 2013, p.5), they have reached a 'tipping point threshold when a critical mass of social actors accepts and buys into it as a social fact' (Subotić 2016, p. 615). Jackson (2004) refers to these structures as 'rhetorical commonplaces' and Lawrence Lessig (1995) as orthodox 'social meaning'. When narratives become accepted in this way, they are more difficult to unsettle, and it will be less likely that they are questioned as the normative framework as which they operate. However, all discursive structures operate on 'moving discursive ground' (Inoue 2006, p. 32). Following this logic, language is not only something that actors are bound to and restrained by. Existing narrative structures, too, operate on 'moving discursive ground' (Ibid.). Here, strategic narratives are an essential tool to question, make and remake sensemaking structures. In this process, identities, behaviours, and issues are created, established, understood and contested.

## 2.4. Agency and Structure: Examining a Longstanding Debate

Narratives can be both: tools for agency and structures. The focus on the interaction of both requires further theoretical examination. In this work, agency is the ability to craft language that links to action within the confines of what is discursively available in order to shift what is discursively possible. This thesis argues that many of the difficulties scholars run into when conceptualising agency, arise because it is difficult to do so without making use of the concept of strategic narratives. While many scholarly efforts have focused on surpassing ‘the limitations of excessively intentionalist and structuralist social science ... these efforts have fallen short due to an inability to overcome the ontological dualism of structure and agency’ (Holland and Bentley 2014, p. 196).

To be sure, long-term narratives, built-in conventions and taken-for-granted discursive and normative structures imply that agents are not entirely free in their choice to strategically narrate a given situation. Yet, ‘human societies, or social systems, would plainly not exist without human agency’ (Giddens 1984, p. 171). Likewise, the assessment has implications for the writing of history and the creation and sustenance of identity narratives. There is no natural order and no natural logic to the writing process of identity narratives. In organising events into coherent narrative structures, actors already exert agency and thereby shape those structures that pose a constraint to agency in the first place.

For a discussion on structure and agency this means that they ‘should not be seen as flip sides of the same coin, but as metals in the alloy from which the coin is forged’ (Holland and Bentley 2014, p. 196). For Colin Hay (2002, p. 127) understanding agency and structure as interwoven also means that ‘agents both internalise perceptions of their context and consciously orient themselves towards that context in choosing between potential courses of action’. Hay’s intervention in the debate resonates closely with the understanding of agency inherent to the strategic narration of events and history more broadly, especially where they concern state identity narrative commitments.

History is a narrative process through which claims around events that are crucial to a state’s identity commitments are substantiated through time. They become commonly shared world views on the meaning of the event for a state identity narrative. They can also settle identity claims made through an event, for example, through ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561). History is not merely the chronological addition of all events that have ever occurred. *History* requires a choice of which events to pay attention to,

and which to ignore – with crucial and lasting implications for how future events are ‘prime[d]’ and ‘see[n]’ (Ibid.). In this way, history comes in narrative form by definition. Where history mirrors the narration of chosen elements into a sequence, it equally reflects the process of writing state identity narratives.

As stated, narratives fluctuate between efforts to unsettle existing structures and efforts to mould narrations into structures. This interaction is crucial to understanding the analytical perspective of this research. It further mirrors Wagner-Pacifci’s (2017) theorisation of events on the move. In her work, she ‘emphasize[s] and analyse[s] the *ongoingness* of events, the ways they are restless and the ways they are subject to continuing oscillations between bounding and unbounding as they extend in time and space’ (Ibid., p. 5). As events consist of narrated ‘shreds of their existence’ (Farge 2007), their possibility of reconfiguration of meaning is infinite. The possibility of history is thus the infinite possibility of an alternative reality constituted by events on the move. Whilst events are on the move, narrations of the past can nevertheless become sedimented and settled into structures. A fixed meaning of the past will make it more difficult to negotiate the narrative structures that have become ‘rhetorical commonplace’ (Jackson 2004). This process of ‘sedimentation’ (Wagner-Pacifci 2017, pp. 122-135) is an integral part of consolidating identity narratives of the *Self* and substantiating movement.

Where narratives are often interchangeably used with stories and grand narratives – akin to structures – strategic narratives add two crucial determining factors: action and actors. Narratives can become “settled” however open to alterations, and grand narratives can be crafted, however orthodox they may or may not be. Narrative structures can emerge and actors can create and sustain them. What is settled, and transient, then, rests in part on which temporal scope scholars examine and what researchers consider as grand narratives. Note how, for example, notions of biblical sanctity, the traditional dichotomy between good and evil can be considered a grand narrative that plays a crucial role in day-to-day politics and politicisation of events. For example, Richard Jackson’s (2005) work on the strategic narration of September 11, 2001, by US policymakers, shows how long-term narratives on good and evil were applied to a new context and thus provided a sensemaking structure for the event. However, the dichotomous grand narrative of good and evil is not the only logical and viable narrative that is available. Even in acceptance of the existence of long-term narratives, how they are filled and made sense of through the narration of short-term episodes, can still be susceptible to strategic use.

Long-term narratives, conventions and taken-for-granted meanings characterise structures in this research. Agency makes possible the creation and sustenance of such structures. Structures are what is discursively available. Acceptable, anticipated, and expected behaviour translates into various representations of that “normalcy”. As Janice Bially-Mattern (2005) outlines, some actors may even strategically use ‘representational force’ to point out inconsistencies in another state’s behaviour. Legal scholar Lessig (1995) argues along similar lines in his essay on the construction of social meaning. Therein, he points out that social meaning exists within text and context, particularly in socio-political areas that are characterised by a fixed orthodoxy, such as law and morality. Lessig (Ibid., p. 951) states that:

Social meanings exist ... they are used by individuals, or groups, to advance individual and collective ends; and ... their force in part hangs upon their resting upon a certain uncontested, or taken-for-granted, background of thought of expectation – alternatively, that though constructed, their force depends upon them not seeming constructed.

Norms, conventions, ‘taken-for-granted’ (Ibid.) realities are imbued with social understandings of oughtness. They introduce behavioural prescriptions of what is socially accepted and what is not. These prescriptions link structures and influence behaviour. They can be considered models (Anderson 2006, pp. 86-87) or scripts (Arsenault, Hong and Price 2017, p. 192). The intersection of language and social meaning paves the way to understanding power relations, and thus the influence of structure on the exertion of agency. Actors cannot narrate entirely free of their situatedness in those (individual and collective) narratives that form part of their world view. As such, their position in time, place, and discursive structures will always restrict and influence on their ability to craft narratives.

These restrictions correspondingly apply to actors who assume to speak for states, or who are perceived as speaking for states. Crafting, producing and disseminating strategic narratives can sometimes be incredibly difficult. The omission of some elements, the possibility of inclusion and the identification with storylines is not a straightforward process. It is not straightforward because the narrative cycle of formation, projection and reception (Miskimmon 2017, pp. 94-95) is not merely a transmission device of narratives that are then accepted by the audience at the end of that transmission. For example, sometimes, different aspects of the narrative do not align. Sometimes, a narrative does not allow sufficiently for participatory interpretation. They can be too exclusive or too inclusive and thus provide no meaning at all. Sometimes, audiences may not consider a narrative credible because conceptual parameters have changed or audiences counter and contest the sensemaking of event through their narratives. International environments can change, or discussions in other policy areas have contributed to a different understanding of that narrative. Sometimes, new

evidence comes to light, or narrative enactment contradicts a narrative. For example, as shown in Chapter 4, whilst Chancellor Helmut Schmidt kept emphasising the narrative of Germany's militant democracy, his choice of narrative enactment contradicted this narrative (see de Graaf 2010) and thus caused a mismatch between narrative and action.

In consideration of events more specifically, their meaning for a group of people, or an individual is not static. An event will mean different things for different people at different times. If events provide a space for strategically making, dissolving, and remaking state identity commitments, there may be unintentional changes to narratives through the changes that the event undergoes. New information may come to light; other events may happen. Certainly, this change can be induced strategically. It may, however, at times, be beyond the narrators' intent or power to guide and transform what the events mean for their intended audience. It could also happen that events occur and are narrated internationally so that it will influence the ability with which political actors can narrate events domestically. It may equally be that the narration of one's state identity stands in conflict with the international narration of one's identity. For example, Monroe Price (2015, p. 50) argues that a strategic narrative requires sufficient momentum and coalescence around narrative forms. When international and domestic strategic narratives coalesce, it becomes increasingly costly for actors to go against these narratives.

These caveats do point to how structure and agency influence and restrict the ability with which actors can narrate. Further, they point to the complexity of strategic narrative work. With these complications in mind, strategic narratives are nevertheless an incredibly powerful tool for certain actors to exert agency. Structures thus limit and enable the exertion of agency. The exertion of agency contributes to the emergence, production and sustenance of structures and '[b]ecause [actors] have the ability to think and use symbols, [they] have an important element of freedom as [they] interact with others and formulate ... actions' (Sandstrom, Martin and Fine 2009, p. 14).

Turning the post-structuralist argument around, if discursive practices and reiterations maintain structures, then the opposite can be achieved as well: dismantling structures and instigating movement by discursive means. How the available elements of discursive structures are configured, assembled and reassembled leaves scope for agency. In this way, new meaning can be given to existing structures by dismantling and reassembling them. The creation of new meaning to existing structures will always influence how reality is understood.

Where strategic narratives provide causal links, they are a means to organise not only what is discursively available, but also our perception of past, present and future in meaningful ways. As will be examined in the following section, if approached as a narrative structure, identity is likewise susceptible to strategic transformation and movement. Agency in strategic narratives thus acknowledges that actors can shape and revise horizons of possibility. This argument is crucial because it introduces more flexibility and susceptibility to strategic use than, for example, research on discourses and norms allow for. This thesis places the possibility and space for strategic action, and ultimately movement in this flexibility.

## 2.5. State Identity and Identity Narratives

In rejecting an essentialist reading of state identity, the closest to an analytical reflection of state identity is by analysis of state identity narratives. To be sure, a multiplicity of complex elements constitutes state identity. Rituals, conventions, flags and symbols all reflect and produce state identity, so can music and literature. It follows that many of the processes underlying state identity – in particular for the individual experiencing it – are subconscious and deeply embedded in available narrative structures.

Examining state identity through the lens of narratives, crucially emphasises the multiplicity of different identity narratives that constitute state identity. In the words of Catharina Kinnvall (2004a, p. 748), identity is reflected in the process of ‘becoming’, which holds for identity narratives as well: they are unfixed and contested. State identity narratives depend on actors forging, fostering and mending them. State identity narratives can, therefore, be manipulated for strategic gain; they can be altered, and they are thus continuously contested. As Joanna Szostek (2017, p. 575) argues:

We are concerned with identity as a shared understanding of the collective Self, where the collective Self of principal interest is the state as an actor on the global stage. The strategic narrative framework emphasises that governments work purposively to shape that shared understanding domestically and internationally, projecting a characterisation of their own state, which serves various strategic goals.

Miskimmon, O’Loughlin and Roselle (2013, p. 32) consider state identity a “‘claim to...attention” or labelling’. State identity, in this sense, is a concept that requires communication. Communication here means that there cannot be a concept of state-identity ‘without a story about that state’ (Steele 2008a, p. 20). Without state identity narratives, actors might know a state spatially, ‘[b]ut conceptually the “idea” of a state cannot exist without this

narration' (Ibid.). State agents from a perspective of narrative identity can 'actualize the power of the state' (Lang 2002, p. 17). State identity narratives are a means to express continuity, to express the identity and to express the underlying values and ideals that guide a state actors' behaviour.

Strategic narratives are an appropriate tool to understanding state identity as a means of representation because they are a means to 'understanding the construction of identity and behavior in international relations due to the narrative structure that includes actors and the agency that narratives afford actors' (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin and Roselle 2013, p. 32). Narrative structures, as argued, are not merely descriptive (see section 2.3.). They are constitutive of political reality, interests, preferences and indeed state identity: 'Plotlines in a state's strategic narrative have a constitutive effect on interests and collective identity among the elite and the public alike' (Szostek 2017, p. 577). Further, strategic narratives on state identity provision a tool for the engagement of audiences and make the interaction amongst states possible.

Identity narratives are the closest to what is analytically available to grasp the identity of a state. Identity narratives outline the identity commitments of a state, both externally and internally and are akin to what Anne Clunan (2009, p. 28) understands as 'a set of ideas that are generally accepted by any group of actors as defining what their collectivity is and the general rules under which it operates'. They make plausible and possible the "unitary" actorness of a state, notwithstanding individual contestation of strategic narratives within a state. They provide a tool to communicate these identity commitments and to engage with domestic and international audiences.

In light of the focus on agency, it is crucial to clarify the actors involved in the process of writing identity narratives. Collective narratives 'can be identified, even if it is created through a process involving individuals in the midst of domestic contestation' (Miskimmon, O'Loughlin and Roselle 2013, p. 34). The identification of such collective narratives holds true for any collective, be it a party, a group, or a state. Strategic narratives are thus a product of individual actors. Yet, where these individual actors – usually elites – speak for a collective, a group or a state, it is possible to identify a group's, a party's and a state's strategic narratives. States are, however, always represented by the individual who assumes to speak for a state. In this way, an individual actor strategically narrates, yet narratives can speak for and make sense of a state. The same logic applies to when individual actors (for example a party leader) speak for the commitments of a given collective, such as a party.

Identity narratives are, therefore, a crucial tool to make sense of state behaviour, but they are also constitutive of behaviour; that is, they make some action possible and foreclose other options. Steele (2010, p. 77) argues that a ‘narrative itself is an outcome of intra-societal debates, but because it emanates from the agents of states, it nevertheless most closely approximates the identity commitments a state will pursue in international relations’. Examining state narratives thus requires the examination of state leaders’ narratives around moments of transformation. Narratives outline and structure what is possible and desirable for a state both internationally and domestically. Individual actors are agents in this negotiation.

A state’s identity, as viewed through the lens of identity narratives, crucially rests on the communicated and expressed representation by agents. Agents represent state agency, which is not to say that a state’s agency can be reduced to agents. Yet, it is to say that what states consider within the ‘purview of [their] agency’ (Steele 2008a, p. 73) is crucially dependent on how actors narrate it. This links to the discussion of identity narratives because what sustains an identity narrative, how it is being presented, challenged and contested, is crucially dependent on what an identity narrative suggests are crises (see Chernobrov 2016). As Steele (2008a, p. 61) outlines: ‘we feel anxiety not about those things that are outside of our control, but about those we perceive to be in the realm of our possible agency’. In conceptualising identity narratives as a means to representation, states cannot “feel” in the same way that agents do, but once agents represent the state, identity narratives provide a tool for understanding representations and identity commitments. Political actors can formulate strategic narratives that aim at creating, substantiating or dislocating these representations and commitments.

In doing so, they can provoke crises of the *Self*, or attempt to mitigate it. How actors narrate a state’s agency crucially implicates identity narrative commitments. For example, a social welfare identity narrative will influence how political actors view a state’s responsibility and scope of action to ensure the social welfare of its citizens. Likewise, Sweden’s feminist government has designed a particular reading of Sweden’s identity (Aggsteam and Bergman-Rosamond 2016). The scope of state agency, its actions, and its responsibilities will be different from states that do not pursue a feminist reading of their identity narrative commitments. The US narrative as a ‘global leader and norm carrier’ (Koper 2017) will make assumptions about state agency, such as, for example, reflected in policies on the Responsibility to Protect (R2P).

The representational aspect of a state is thus a politically valuable currency, and of strategic importance. Identity narratives are reflective of these representations. Scholars must

pay particular attention to this currency because it shapes how states negotiate interests and policies. The act of upholding the image that represents a state's identity is, therefore, both a political currency and a communicative tool. Furthermore, where representations and expected behaviour falls apart, political legitimacy can be questioned – both internally and externally. In turn, states and political actors within the state should, in theory, have a vested interest in the production and fulfilment of (consistent) representations. Further, political actors should, in theory, have a vested interest in fulfilling perceived expectations attached to representations.

In this sense, the '[s]elf-consciousness of states is based on a coherent narrative representation of the Self and the world, carried through stylized images drawn from the past and spatial metaphors' (Berenskoetter 2014, p. 269). To be sure, states sometimes seek coherent narrative representations. However, it is equally possible to use ontological erosion as a strategic tool to narrate changes to representations of identity. State identity understood as a constructed narrative, means that it can be contested and altered. A state's identity from the perspective of identity narratives will fluctuate and is malleable to strategic use. Actors can thus seek to narrate changes to these identity commitments and representations.

## 2.6. What is an Event?

This thesis argues that critical events serve as a compounded space in which scholars can observe the interaction of short-term narrations and long-term narratives. During a critical event, political actors can strategically narrate the ontological status of a state's identity. What, however, is an event, and how does it differ from critical events? IR research has taken for granted the event as an analytical unit, without thoroughly engaging its broader theorisation. The lack of existing approaches to event theorisation in IR is striking because events are fundamental objects and subjects of IR research. The lack of theorising the event in IR speaks to the need for interdisciplinary research. Sociology, history, philosophy and anthropology, for example, have long grappled with questions on how to theorise events. Yet, even in the disciplines where events have been afforded theoretical attention, 'the event poses a problem' (Bensa and Fassin 2002, translated by author) as social sciences 'tend to forget it all too often' (Ibid.). Concurring with Alban Bensa and Eric Fassin, this research argues that this neglect rests in part on the difficulty to conceptualise events.

First, the ontological and epistemological status of the event remains controversial. When do events happen? Can an event be an event if it is not consciously recognised? Where

and when does an event start and end? Where and how can scholars break down events? What is the appropriate analytical unit? How can scholars know what an event is and by what measures can researchers assess “eventness”?

Second, the event is commonly understood as antithetical to structures, which creates a theoretical problem that is particularly relevant for this thesis. As Marshall Sahlins (in Sewell 2005, p. 199) outlines:

For a certain anthropology, as for a certain history, it seemed that “event” and “structure” could not occupy the same epistemological space. The event was conceived as antistructural, the structure as nullifying the event ... Structure is to the event as the social to the individual, the essential to the accidental, the recurrent to the idiosyncratic, the visible to the invisible, the lawful to the aleatory, the quotidian to the extraordinary, the silent to the audible, the anonymous to the authored, the normal to the traumatic, the comparable to the unique.

Sahlins (1985; 1991) elucidates on a longstanding debate in the historical sciences that is produced by the binary approach to event and structure. Drawing on Sahlins, this thesis explores how events bind structure and agency. They serve as a compounded space in which agency and structures interact, and are made to interact by different actors.

### 2.6.1. Towards a Narrative Reading of Events

Positivist research has highlighted the event as a singular, unified occurrence from which scholars can draw generalisable inferences. Events are units and observable entities, in which questions are not directed primarily at how, but to which end and for which reasons, an event occurs. In a positivist reading, events are abstract entities. Where the event has an ontological root, that is where it “happens”, researchers presume an abstract unity to its occurrence. With observable events, positivist history hopes to ‘uncover the “laws” of historical developments’ (Tosh 2002, p. 109). In this way, events punctuate and are indicative of ‘historical developments’ (Ibid.). However, this position has bearings on the discussion of structure and agency. Where events are punctuations to historical developments, they cannot be developments in their own right. From this perspective, if historical developments are processes, and laws guiding these processes are structures, the event will become neither. In a positivist reading, an event thus cannot be either structure or process, and by default becomes a separate epistemological category.

The so-called Annales School forms the opposite end to a positivist reading of events. It denies the relevance of events for history altogether. Instead, the Annales School emphasises the importance of structures and processes: ‘The intellectual project started by fighting a positivist history; it disqualified it precisely *because* of its eventness’ (Bensa and

Fassin 2002, italics added, translated by author). The Annales School proposes a focus on structures and processes and seeks to neglect the event to analyse the *longue durée*, i.e. cycles and patterns through time. The Annales School suggests a ‘total history’ (Braudel in Ricoeur 1984, p. 103), where ‘the series dissolves the singularity, the context absorbs the chronicle’ (Bensa and Fassin 2002, translated by author). From the perspective of this research, the critical suggestion the Annales School makes is to surpass both the individual and the event. Fernand Braudel, for example, proposed an ‘anonymous history, working the depths, and most often in silence’ (Braudel in Ricoeur 1984, pp. 103-104). Braudel’s (Ibid.) take on reality considers the world one of ‘vivid passions, certainly but a blind world ... [o]blivious to the deep currents of history, of those living waters on which our frail barks are tossed like Rimbaud’s drunken boat’. For the Annales School, akin to Rimbaud’s boat, grander themes absorb the currents of history; the analysis focuses on tides rather than waves, to stick with Braudel’s metaphor. History here is structures and processes, and the Annales School suggests that to examine and gain an understanding of history, researchers should not focus on the event.

The positivist reading and the Annales School are grounded in a dichotomous understanding of event and structure. This dichotomy poses a multitude of problems for scholars. Events punctuate structures and therefore form an inherent part of any structural dynamism and logic. Further, it is only through structures that events can be made sense of. Structure and event are thus inextricably intertwined. It follows that ‘if structures define and shape events, then it is also true that events (re)define and (re)shape structures’ (Sewell 2005, p. 200).

Even from the perspective of the Annales School, the structures and processes that are of analytical importance are determined by their temporal subjectivity. Not all structures will receive equal analytical attention. A choice of analytical focus will pay more attention to some procedural cycles than others. This choice is relevant because it shifts the focus of historical attention and research activity. Further, neglecting the event and the individual, silences a crucial aspect of the making and writing of history, namely that of agency. Cycles, patterns and structures are neither free of agency nor are they self-evident and natural. Even if specific patterns and cycles are discernible (recurrence of wars, for example), the Annales School will offer little insight into what is distinct about these recurrences. Instead, scholars have to ask who has a stake and who is involved in producing these patterns?

Paul Ricoeur (1981; 1990) offers a pertinent critique of both approaches. He crucially points to the importance of narratives, which moves the discussion towards Nola’s (in Rowner

2015, p. 5) *Return of the Event*. History is not “event-free” and decisively shaped by the narration of events. Researchers analyse events through the acknowledgement of their social production by agents, and the historian confronts questions on the possibility of historical objectivity. In theorising the link between narrative and history, Ricoeur (1981) argues that the weakness of positivist thought lies in neglecting the production of meaning. In particular, Ricoeur (Ibid.) addresses sources of meaning, their implications for how events are interpreted, and he rejects the analytical benefit of searching for the essence of an event. The focus thus shifts towards the ‘always uneasy relationship between supposedly “concrete” socio-historical events and their narration ... and the status of a privileged mode of narrative on history’ (Mouzakitis 2014, p. 394). This uneasy relationship matters for the conceptualisation of the event in this thesis. Understanding history, memory and the processes by which events become part of either, necessitate an analysis of the uneasy relationship between ‘concrete’ (Ibid.) events and their narration. More so, it requires an analysis of how this process leaves scope for agency.

In accepting a narrative reading of events, it remains unclear what *makes* the event because events fluctuate between series and singularity (Wagner-Pacifici 2010; 2017). White (2008, p. 17), for example, questions whether a historic event ‘is a sign of rupture in a series and a point of metamorphosis from one level, phase or aspect of the historical continuum to another’ or ‘a sign of transition from one phase of a continuum to another’. Because it is so difficult to categorise events either as singular occurrences or as part of a series, scholars need to acknowledge the role of strategic narratives. More specifically, Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino (2019, p. 561) have suggested a narrative approach to the study of, for example, violent events, which speaks pertinently to the research in this thesis. They argue that a ‘narrative approach ... underscores that intuitive leanings toward interpreting violence as terrorism are a sign of political agency precisely because they are produced through the stories political agents tell’ (Ibid.).

In the same way, whether an event factually constitutes a rupture or not, should not be the analytical focus. Instead, attention should be paid to where actors narrate rupture strategically. Whilst an event may shatter perceptions and meaning in one area, it may not in others. In the same way, whilst it may shatter perceptions and meaning for some people, it may not for others. It follows that the narratives that make sense of rupture link to narratives on values, system, and issues – and as such identity. Which identity is addressed? How does this rupture affect the narration of, and representational claims speaking for, the collective?

What issues are part of this rupture? Which system is affected, and how does this rupture change the interactional logic of this system?

Of course, not all events have to be a rupture. Similar events happen over time and might elicit similar responses or might not at all be recognised as relevant for a state's identity, despite being similar in nature. Herein, however, lays the power of how an event's meaning is produced. In the story on violent terrorist events, for example, 'what are often perceived as "intuitive" characteristics of a violent event do not inevitably trigger an interpretation of violence as an act of terror – this depends instead on the types of rhetorical claims made by political agents' (Ibid., p. 575). Further, the 'recognition of an event *requires* recurrence and repetition through the aegis of representation. Event singularity is inevitably compromised by the analogizing, evaluating, and genealogizing political semiotic work of these historical subjects' (Wagner-Pacifici 2017, p. 69, italics in original). The event is thus torn between series and singularity, continuity and change. How actors, individuals and audiences come to understand it depends on how they narrate this ambiguity. In an event's narration lies agentic power.

Ejdus (2020, p. 2) has conceptualised the significance of ruptures in ontological security research by examining 'critical situations'. Ejdus (Ibid.) characterises '[t]he key feature of critical situations' as 'the inability of collective actors to bracket out ... fundamental questions about the unreliability of the international order, finitude of politics, impertinence of relationships and inconsistency of collective autobiographies'. Ejdus' (Ibid.) reading of 'critical situations' thus suggests that the significance of rupture is not so much whether rupture factually exists but how actors narrate it, to which end and with which response to the questions that a 'critical situation' (Ibid.) poses. The significance of rupture and its narration thus bring political agency into the contestation over an event's meaning.

In this research, events are, therefore, artificial unities bound by their narration; this is to say that events are narrated 'shreds of [their] existence' (Farge 2007) and that they are placed in time and space. An event is continuously driven by the paradox of trying to grasp its unity and its fleeting and ever-changing shreds of existence: 'The paradox of events understood sociologically [is that] —you cannot have an event without boundaries, and you cannot definitively bind an event' (Wagner-Pacifici 2010, p. 1356). The fleeting dynamic of events, mirrors the project on the 'semiotics of history', by Yuri Lotman and Boris Uspensky (in Tamm 2015, p. 8) in which events are always changing, subject to continuous reinterpretation:

From this point of view, it is thus not the objective meaning of events (if anything of the kind be presumed to exist) that matters, but the way they are perceived, the way they are read. Under these circumstances, the fact that some events are perceived as momentous – regardless of whether they are products of symbolic activity or not – gains key importance: the way a sequence of events is interpreted determines the further course of events.

The ‘semiotics of history’ (Ibid.) find their sociological counterpart in Wagner-Pacifici’s (2010; 2017) work on events on the move, which highlights the importance of recognising the semiotic activity around ‘critical situations’ (Ejdus 2020, p. 2). Events thus gather different meanings, understandings, and readings over time. Sometimes the original meaning attached might be negated. An event’s meaning might come to be understood as something else, or audiences and time add additional layers of meaning to it. The event is thus restless, despite (semantic) efforts to pin it down. Narratives grapple with this paradox. Events are moved by and move through narratives, and narratives aim at moulding and placing them into existing narrative structures. Indeed, rituals, symbolic activity and acts that, for example, are set in stone by monuments and memorial sites, might support this process of sedimentation. And yet, these will not stop the event’s potential to be on the move.

Furthermore, the sedimentation efforts might facilitate changes in existing narratives. New memorials or new event “sites” may change how actors talk about an event and how they historically understand it. It follows that events ‘are restless by nature as historical subjects attempt alternately to bind them or set them free’ (Wagner-Pacifici 2017, p. 154). It follows that in effect ‘all event sedimentations are provisional, and the work of representing indexing and performatively constituting their forms, flows, and social identities is unrelenting’ (Ibid.). It is this paradox that drives the political stakes of events. The interaction between sedimentation and restlessness provides a possible space for the making, dissolution and remaking of identities through ‘the attempt by different parties to establish the “true” story that underlies and explains the event’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 575). It requires a reading of the event, not as the punctuation of occurrences in the progression of time but as subject to agentic configuration and reconfiguration. As William Sewell (2005, p. 229) outlines:

In spite of the punctualist connotations of the term, historical events are never instantaneous happenings: they always have a duration, a period that elapses between the initial rupture and the subsequent structural transformation. During this period, the usual articulations between different structures become profoundly dislocated.

Similarly, the understanding of an event as singular or as part of a series is subject to its narration. By ‘emplotment’ (White 1997, p. 392) into existing narrative structures, “singular” events can be placed within a plot. Yet, where the event is narrated to break with the existing

plotline of a national biography's historical progression, its singularity has to be narratively forged.

The forging process of an event as singularity or series links closely to the concept of 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561). This thesis adds to the discussion on 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.) by arguing that where an event is narrated dominantly as a singularity, political actors enable setting new anchors as a means to settle the uncertainty inherent to the singularity of a 'critical situation' (Ejdus 2020, p. 2). Where actors focus instead on the event as part of a series, they enable the substantiation of existing anchors, especially where they link the event to previous events that are narrated to be similar in nature. 'Discursive anchors' (Ibid.) also decisively influence how affect drives audiences and actors to 'see' (Ibid., p. 567) events within a given interpretative framework. In the context of terrorist events, 'discursive anchors' (Ibid., p. 561), such as the contention in this thesis, are not only meaningful because they 'set forth what type of violence is acceptable' (Ibid., p. 575) but also because they influence how audiences react to an event. They, therefore, also decisively influence the affect landscape and an event's pre-discursive meaning-making.

### 2.6.2. Critical Events, Affect and Discursive Anchors

How do strategic narratives, critical events and affect interact? To start with, affect plays a crucial role in the sensemaking processes of events. Affective responses describe the pre-narrated visceral reaction to an event and thus also effectively pre-mediate narrative sensemaking. While '[a]ffect ... is closely related to emotion', it 'emphasizes the more ephemeral and mobile aspects of emotion that operate on less-than-conscious registers' (Solomon and Steele 2017, p. 269). In explaining the link between emotions and affect Ty Solomon (2012, p. 908) states:

Emotions result when extra-discursive affect is translated into recognizable emotional signifiers within discourse. Affect is understood here as the amorphous potential that remains outside of discourse, which is difficult to articulate but nevertheless has effects within discourse. Emotion, on the other hand, can be viewed as the "feeling" that signifiers "represent" once names are attached to affect, thereby conferring on them discursive reality.

For Solomon, affect is pre-discursive, on the basis of which language can be formed. It is the initial 'experience of an event, which is biological, cultural and somehow before and beyond its discursive articulation' (Holland and Solomon 2014, p. 6). In this way, affect and expression of emotions and the narration of identity, interact in decisive ways: they 'reinforce

each other in constituting collective understandings and in producing political outcomes’ (Ibid., p. 7).

Affect further crucially links the themes discussed in this thesis: from the spatio-temporal situatedness (Berenskoetter 2014, p. 262) of the person experiencing affect, the response to an event, to its strategic sensemaking processes. Affect underlies these processes as an undercurrent and whilst being pre-discursive, it nevertheless ties crucially to how actors strategically form affect into narratives. As Steele and Solomon (2017, p. 269) state:

Space is closely related to affect, and conceptualizing space as socially produced, rather than an “empty” or neutral category, offers a view to how affective practices coincide with the production of space as socially meaningful, which, in turn, shapes the identities produced therein. Both are tied to the politics of time.

Steele and Solomon point to the crucial link to event temporality. Because affect is further tied to expectations, it crucially links to the narration of rupture and ‘critical situations’ (Ejduš 2020, p. 2). Whilst this thesis argues that rupture has to be narrated, there remains the crucial question about what happens when rupture is felt prior to the narration of such rupture. In addressing this caveat, this thesis argues that affect is vital for the emergence of strategic narratives in ‘critical situations’ (Ibid.). Not only can affect help trigger strategic narrative sensemaking, but it also influences and shapes the nature, content and scope of strategic narratives. In other words: affect pre-mediate the narrative landscape.

For example, in the context of this research, it is difficult to imagine that political actors do not take into account the shock, sadness or fear experienced by citizens after a terrorist attack. Taking September 11, 2001, as an example, Jack Holland and Solomon (2014, p. 269) argue that the event revealed the ‘discrepancy between biocultural expectation and apparent reality’, which ‘ensured that the foreignness of the events was “felt” before it was put into words’. The “feeling” of foreignness – a feeling stipulated by a discrepancy between structural expectations and anticipated future – is one that is difficult to measure, yet will find expression. Where it finds expression, it can be traced and examined in the narrative cycle.

In this sense, whilst affective responses may differ, they are deeply bound by structural expectations and previous experiences. Affect is difficult to measure, yet critical in understanding the processes, reactions, concerns, and agendas in international relations (Massumi 2015). At the same time, affect is also pre-determined by pre-existing long-term narratives on state identity. People have an affective response to an event *because* existing narratives suggest that the values or expectations are under attack. When Paris’ Notre Dame cathedral burned in 2019, for example, the horror and shock inherent to the immediate response to the burning symbol was possible, precisely because the cathedral had a place in,

and symbolic value for, French state identity. It was a symbol of the aesthetic *Self*. Even more, it carried symbolic value for people beyond France and beyond French state identity. Different groups of people tied different symbolisms and value narratives to the monument. People experienced affect, then, because the affective response had been conditioned by the identity narratives held by audiences prior to the event.

Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino (2019, p. 561) aptly describe the conditioning of long-term narratives in informing affective responses to events by the concept of ‘discursive anchors’ that are attached to specific interpretations of violent events. They argue that there is no inherent or natural way to ‘see’ events in a specific way as they occur. Affective and pre-discursive responses are equally ‘primed’ (Ibid., p. 567) by previous narrations of what constitutes a specific event, for example, a terrorist attack. The interaction between affect and ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid., p. 561) thus crucially informs the stakes involved in the process of writing history because ‘without narratives, such events remain unintelligible’ (Ibid., p. 563). For terrorist, violent events this means that ‘there is no metaphysical essence that makes its appearance as a terrorist act’ but ‘it is both an interpretation that we subjectively project onto violent events through narratives and a process in which we mould our understanding of the occurrence to fit pre-existing discursive maps’ (Ibid.). In as much as these ‘discursive maps’ (Ibid.) inform the sensemaking of an event, they also inform affective response as we are ‘primed’ to ‘see’ (Ibid., p. 561) certain events more likely as acts of terrorist violence than others.

The interaction of affect is essential to consider because it brings agency back into the discussion. Because the stakes of interpreting events in a specific way are high, political actors have an interest in offering a dominant reading of an event. The stakes are high because ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) not only delineate moral boundaries of acceptable violence, but they also – as is the contention of this thesis – crucially bind identity narrative commitments, the state’s purview of agency and narrative enactment. Where an event becomes narrated as either a singular occurrence or as part of a series, it also binds narrations of the significance of an event for identity narrative commitments. It follows that where, for example, new ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) are set, this thesis argues that they not only offer specific primers for how future events are seen, but also how a state should react, with which policies and by outlining and responding with which identity narrative commitments.

When strategic narratives seek to persuade a collective of a determined meaning, the contestation of meaning is intrinsically connected to the mobilisation of audiences. The power of ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.), then also lies in their ability to mobilise audiences around

events. In the context of terrorist attacks, the creation of a shared consensus on the “price of freedom” for example, will make it easier to push for and legitimise restrictive policies. Equally, even if state behaviour contradicted existing expectations, a shared consensus on the significance of an event can help to mitigate the relevance of such a contradiction. If, for example, a state reacted by military means – despite its state identity narratives suggesting otherwise – yet there was a shared consensus on the significance of the traumatic nature of an event, contradictory behaviour might seem less relevant. In this way, ontological insecurity during events not only opens windows of opportunity, but it is also a means to mobilise around policies and narratives that were previously considered “unthinkable”. Simply put, affect and anxiety can open space that helps to unsettle what once were solid narrative structures.

For strategic narratives to provide a meaningful structure of reality, they require social actors to accept this meaning and to accept the reality that strategic narratives offer. Social actors need to identify with existing strategic narratives and proposed changes to strategic narratives. Whilst frames offer means of identification and provide categories of sensemaking by what is linguistically known, they lack the focus on how social actors interact with and participate in settling strategic narratives: ‘Narrative understandings of identity, in contrast, emphasize the structuring of events into evolving wholes’ (Polletta 1998, p. 140) Their projection of the future is what provides grounds for active engagement with(in) the story.

This interactional logic of between narrator and audience requires participatory interpretation of the audience. Social actors need to engage with strategic narratives to render intelligible reality and events as they unfold. Political actors require means by which these moments can provide the potential for strategic reorientation or consolidation of existing narratives on state identity. To do so, political actors can seek to “recruit” and mobilise people supporting their cause. The mobilisation of people behind a political cause is a means to gather support on proposed policies and narrative changes. As narratives are reformulated at times of trauma, changes to identity narratives require support and the possibility for identifying with these changes. Where these changes are supported, they provide a means for political actors to push for policies that might have been rejected in a different narrative structure. Strategic narratives need to ensure that new elements do not feel at odds with what is understood to be the identity of a given state. It is a means to bind citizens and external actors to the credibility of one’s narrative, and therefore a means to maintain authority over roles, behaviours and actions.

It is, therefore, paramount for political actors to secure citizens' and external actors' support. Political actors need to provide a meaningful structure through which a crisis event is understood. Incongruities that are exposed require their reformulation towards a coherent, collective and identifiable identity. Whether this is by means of reiterating, restoring or redescribing identity narratives is irrelevant in this process; it is the narrative process that matters for mobilisation. However, mobilisation is also dependent on the content and extent of narratives and their revision or substantiation around the event as singularity or series; as new 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) or as substantiation of previously set anchors.

This can be strategically exploited. Strategic narratives can create or play into affect and emotions. In fact, they have to if they seek to persuade. Note how, for example, Sara Ahmed's (2004, p. 45) work on the ripple effect of emotions suggest that "what sticks" is bound up with the "absent presence" of historicity'. In this way, affect and viscerally felt emotional experiences shape how narratives are remembered and how they 'stick' (see Miskimmon and O'Loughlin 2019). Narratives have to, therefore, play into affect and emotions because it is unlikely the better argument that wins (Risse 2000), but the better story. Stories and strategic narratives are successful because they mean something to people. Meaning is powerful when it is tied to identity. Feelings, emotions and affect therefore play a crucial role in world politics (Bleiker and Hutchison 2008; Crawford 2000; Eznack 2011; Lebow 2006; Leep 2010; Ross 2006; 2013; Sasley 2011; Saurette 2006; Solomon 2015). Individuals experience identity, not by the most logical chronological order of a life's story, but by what reflects most likely on the identity commitments they pursue on a state and an individual level.

For the discussion of agency in the process of narrative formation, this means two things: First, strategic narratives can stimulate and draw on affect and emotions. Second, if existing long-term narratives influence affect, the negotiation of long-term narratives through short-term narrations are also subject to agency. Affect further decisively substantiates the felt experience of unsettledness during a crisis. In this sense, crises can be understood as felt dislocations of meaning, where no sensemaking structure is yet prevalent.

Shock and rupture materialise through affect, in causing pre-conscious (physical) reactions to an occurrence. Conversely, they shape the scope of and later themes of event narratives decisively. The affect landscape is crucial to how strategic narratives can and do emerge, but states cannot react affectively in the same way as individuals. It is political actors within a state that do. It is political actors in their exertion of agency that negotiate the affect

landscape, which also links to the similarities and differences between the individual and a collective, or the agent and the state an actor is speaking for. Whilst states cannot in the same way “feel”, the actors that speak for a state’s identity can. Indeed, political actors draw decisively on expressions of emotions and articulations of rupture to narrate identity. If identity is understood by means of identity narratives, it is possible to identify the placement of transformation within settled identity narratives. The reading of affect and ontological security moves away from discussions of the subject-focused approach in ontological security to the acknowledgement of the subject within a wider affective context. It ‘proposes a shift of focus away from categories of discrete subjects and emotions and towards more fluid affective environments within which agents emerge as distinct subjects’ (Solomon 2018, p. 945). In this view too, however, political actors can exploit and strategically narrate an affective “mood”, which also concerns the exploitation of ‘affective atmospheres’ (Anderson 2009). A narrative reading of events facilitates and, indeed, enables such an exploration.

## 2.7. Conclusion

Even when agentic constructivism and ontological security are committed to an agentic reading of narratives, too often, they still focus on structural explanations and narratives as structures. This research intends to bring the event back into an analysis of narratives because events serve as a link between structure and agency. Simply put, they make visible the friction of the encounter between the known and the unknown. They make possible the study of the interaction between long-term narrative structures and agentic short-term narrations.

In developing a framework for the interaction of both, this thesis argues that identity narratives should be conceptualised as more volatile and susceptible to strategic use than research currently suggests. Further, where research seeks an explanation for changes to foreign policy whilst representational claims are understood to remain the same, this thesis seeks to argue that change and continuity can only be understood by means of where they are narrated as such. The critical focus then does not rest on the ontological nature of changes and how they can be explained but who narrates change and to which effect. This thesis principally argues that change and continuity are, therefore, narrative processes. The argument in this research is that what is supposed to be a change to, for example, a country’s foreign policy, is always an alteration to aspects of existing identity narrative structures as well.

In the process of conceptualising the event and strategic narratives, this chapter proposed a multitude of possible links between both concepts. It is at the junction between strategic narratives and events that agency comes to the fore. What holds events in place, what keeps them on the move, what attaches and denies meaning is a process infused with language power, despite the existing socio-cultural limitations addressed.

Critically, not all events' meanings are purely a result of strategic ends. Presuming so neglects the dynamics within society, culture, and media that attach meanings to events. In the context of violent terrorist events, Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino (2019, p. 575) argue that '[w]hile the phenomenology of violence plays an important role in terrorism stories, the meanings attached to events are subject to contestation, and political agents may offer different interpretations in their attempts to "own" the narrative'. Acknowledging the importance of the "material reality" of an event and its phenomenological status also means to take note of the importance of affect (Solomon 2018) and pre-discursive sensemaking processes.

Events do contain a life of their own, untouchable by strategy and strategic narratives. Neither do all semantic changes rest on strategy and intent nor do all meanings of an event. Yet, more analytical attention has to be paid to where the meaning of events *is* tied to strategic narratives around the making, dissolution and remaking of identities. As Wagner-Pacifici (2017, p. 11) outlines:

The work of producing historical events takes enormous effort on the parts of myriad social agents and forces. Events must force their way into historical subjects' fields of attention and action. Great things are at stake, including the making, dissolution, and remaking of social and political identities and the (re)distribution of power and resources.

For if events are socio-linguistically produced and reproduced, and if agency lies in these processes, then it follows that there is a possibility for agency and strategy in the making of identities through events.

# Chapter 3

## Analytical and Methodological Framework

### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter sets out the analytical and methodological framework of this thesis. It, therefore, complements the theoretical discussion in Chapter 2 by providing insights into how research on the agentic reading of the strategic negotiation of the state's ontological status can be analytically and methodologically operationalised. An agentic reading of the negotiation of a state's ontological status entails several central questions surrounding the analysis of anxiety, narratives and ultimately agency. How can anxiety be traced in which data? How can strategic narrative analysis reflect on agency and anxiety? How can which research design trace and extract narratives that speak to change and continuity? How does the expression of identity narratives speak to actions and behaviour? How can agency be measured and how can methods reflect on this agency? Answering these questions implies a rigorous establishment of an analytical and methodological framework, not least where research on ontological security, anxiety and identity grapples with highly sophisticated and “fuzzy” concepts.

At the heart of these questions is the idea that agency in the process of identity negotiation requires a set of conditions that enable these processes. This methodological chapter outlines a possible way of answering to: (1) which conditions are needed, and (2) how they enable processes of identity negotiation. This thesis takes seriously the argument that ‘a non-positivist, critical methodology should – first – acknowledge that the production of

knowledge is not neutral, but a political (and emancipatory) endeavour' (Lai and Roccu 2019, p. 72). In doing so, this thesis relies on 'methodological strategies and methods that are relational, dialogic and participatory' (Ibid.). In the exploration of these approaches, the research design draws on an 'abductive logic of inquiry' that is 'iterative', and 'recursive' (Ibid.). The theoretical groundwork serves as a point of departure for addressing questions subject to the 'dynamic flexibility in [the] implementation of design as learning occurs' (Ibid.).

A research case that explores agency around events lends itself to the employment of case studies. Case studies are a preferred strategy when the researcher carries a 'desire to understand' (Yin 1994, p. 3) complex phenomena. Data will be selected and collected according to the standards shared with qualitative historical analysis (Thies 2002), which also points to the caveats of historical research in political science. Given the focus on narrative, this thesis will examine the collected data by using narrative analysis. More generally, '[n]arrative analysis is often used to connect ... observations in qualitative analyses' (Thies, 2002, p. 353).

The employment of case studies in this thesis commits to a critical methodology and critical methods. In the commitment to a critical methodology, critical case study research focuses on 'ongoing and evolving learning' (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, p. 55). This commitment welcomes the evolving sensemaking and the logic of the hermeneutic cycle while acknowledging that prior knowledge and context for each case are decisive elements in this process (see Gadamer 1976; Bentz and Shapiro 1998).

Critically, the 'requisite open-endedness and flexibility often make interpretative research designs appear – from the perspective of the much more closed-ended and controlled positivist design – underdeveloped' (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, p. 55). In line with the contention of this thesis, however, this open-endedness is necessary and indeed, an 'intentional strategy' (Ibid.). It follows that '[t]he extended case methodology constitutes a non-positivist avenue to case study research that responds to the needs of critical scholars' (Lai and Roccu 2019, p. 73). Moreover, because critical case study methodology focuses on processes and 'evolving learning' (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, p. 55), it is well suited to incorporate a multi-method approach for data selection and narrative analysis (see Chatterjee 2009; Poteete 2010). The incorporation of a reflexive, multi-method approach is essential because while it 'might seem easy to determine if we are inside or outside an event ... these determinations are neither easy to make nor clear' (Wagner-Pacifici 2017, p. 16; see also Bourdieu and Waquant 1992). In turn, the research angle needs to be open to "find" traces of

the event guided by intertextuality (see Kristeva 1980; Bauman and Briggs 1990) and transparency.

## 3.2. Case Study Selection

In a critical extended case methodology (Lai and Roccu 2019, p. 79), the most crucial aspect at the onset of entertaining such a methodology is to acknowledge that ‘theory is a prism through which we approach and interpret reality, which guides, but does not determine our research’. Further, the extended case methodology is a ‘non-positivist route to systematically conducting empirical analysis, thus providing a viable alternative to conventional approaches to case study research’ (Ibid., p. 81). In line with critical approaches in International Relations (IR) research, the approach to an extended case methodology thus embraces the complexity of the selected cases. It further commits to a reflexive approach of building a case around the acknowledgement of the temporal and spatial situatedness of the researcher and each case.

In this thesis, the case selection for such an extended case methodology rests on a definition of ‘critical situations’ that are ‘define[d] as radical disjunctions that challenge the ability of states to “go on” by bringing into the realm of discursive consciousness four fundamental questions related to *existence, finitude, relations and autobiography*’ (Ejdus 2020, p. 2, italics in original). Critical situations have, as a consequence, the ‘flooding through of collective anxieties’ (Ibid.). While the three cases examined in this thesis vary in terms of how and how much they question all four elements, the emergence of ‘collective anxieties’ (Ibid.) is a crucial element in the case selection process. This thesis focuses on terrorist, violent events that political actors and audiences “read” or acknowledge as such ‘critical situations’ (Ibid.).

As is the contention of this thesis, the theoretical argument enables the exploration of a range of different events that are narrated as ruptures or engender notions of uncertainty, anxiety and crisis, such as natural catastrophes, scandals, or health crises. The theorisation proposed in this study welcomes and encourages research on other events that are acknowledged by actors as a ‘critical situation’ (Ejdus 2020, p. 2; see also Chapter 7). However, the primary concern of this thesis is to examine the validity of the theoretical proposition. With this objective in mind, a study of events that fall in similar categories – such as terrorist violence – enables a comparative examination of the interaction of long- and short-term narratives. It further enables a comparative analysis of state identity negotiation because context and findings can build on each other. Where terrorist acts need a story for their

substantiation, ‘discursive anchor[ing]’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) and ultimately sensemaking of future events, they speak in particular to an event’s temporality. As all events are fundamentally different, yet all perceived as violent terrorist acts, the case selection offers an invaluable comparative perspective on their sensemaking through time. It follows that this thesis focuses on violent terrorist attacks for three reasons:

First, terrorism has been among, if not the most prominent security issue since, arguably, September 11, 2001 (see Hoffman 2002). Where terrorist acts are understood to endanger the material security of states, they also come to question the ontological security of the state because they speak in particular to how state actors narrate the state’s ‘purview of ... agency’ (Steele 2008a, p. 73). When terrorist acts fall within the remit of the state’s ‘purview of ... agency’ (Ibid.), they inherit a potential to examine the negotiation of a state’s ontological status and identity narratives. The political attention and behavioural reaction to, and narrative sensemaking of, events serve as evidence for when actors consider them to fall within the remit of a state’s ‘purview of ... agency’ (Ibid.).

Second, violent events and what political actors understand as terrorism rely on their narration as significant to state identity narratives. Definitions of terrorist events and their ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) ‘set forth what type of violence is morally acceptable and at what point the use of force enters the red zone of deplorable behaviour, thereby setting the boundaries of political possibility’ (Ibid., p. 575). The boundaries of political possibility enable policy choices and agency because political agents recognise and narrate them as within the ‘purview of [state] agency’ (Steele 2008a, p. 73).

Third, how violent events are ‘discursive[ly] anchor[ed]’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) in narrations of terrorism and state identity presents an excellent opportunity to assess how notions of uncertainty, anxiety and crisis link to state identity narrative negotiation. It further allows a more in-depth understanding of how ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) not only ‘foster the normalization of an event as an act of terrorism’ (Ibid., p. 562), but also how the normalisation of terrorist violence incorporates specific identity narrative commitments by states as narrated through critical events.

The three cases chosen for this study are the Schleyer kidnapping of 1977; September 11, 2001; and the Berlin truck attack of 2016. All three cases pertained – to varying degrees – to the characteristic features that Filip Ejdus (2020, p. 2) references. The three case studies present the opportunity to examine the theoretical argument from three angles: (1) from the perspective of a domestic terrorist attack (Schleyer), (2) in the context of an international

crisis and a terrorist event that did not occur on German territory (September 11, 2001), and (3) in the context of competing domestic and international crises (Berlin truck attack).

While the focus here rests principally on events that occurred in Germany, September 11, 2001, has to be included, if this research takes seriously its objective to examine identity narrative negotiation around terrorist crisis events. Simply put: September 11, 2001, is too big to ignore, even for German identity narratives. September 11, 2001, directly spoke to existential questions, such as the future of the transatlantic partnership and the future of the international order. In addressing these existential questions, German policymakers established the event's significance for German identity narrative negotiation.

To be sure, the three cases were not the only terrorist attacks that occurred between 1976 and 2019, either domestically or internationally. However, even if narrowed to a list of terrorist attacks that occurred domestically, it would not have been possible to create a comprehensive list of terror attacks in Germany because different definitions of terrorism will render different results. For example, the NSU Affair revealed the inherent political and bias nature of classifying terrorist attacks.<sup>1</sup> In this way, the exclusion of the NSU attacks in the case selection, speaks to the difficulty of actors to create new 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) for terrorist violence, when not established around events that political actors recognise as compounded spaces for identity negotiation.

Undoubtedly, a discussion emerged after the NSU Affair around the classification of far-right terrorism in German political discourse and its media representation (see Graef 2020). Chancellor Angela Merkel (2012, translated by author) did speak of 'terrorism in our midst' and thus acknowledged and named the NSU attacks as terrorist events. However, the analysis in this thesis also revealed that 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-

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<sup>1</sup> In November 2011, it was discovered that a number of murders between 2000 and 2007 were committed by the far-right group National Socialist Underground (Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund, NSU): 'During the investigation of the crimes – the serial killing of nine men with Turkish and Greek migration backgrounds, the explosion of a nail bomb in a Turkish-dominated shopping street in Cologne that injured twenty-two people, and the murder of a female police officer – the perpetrators were primarily located within "deviant foreign milieus" in all three cases', which further obscured the investigation and ill-addressed the organised and political nature of these crimes (Graef 2020, p. 509). The discovery that all attacks had been perpetrated by the NSU, 'motivated by their hate of non-White minorities', 'sent shockwaves through the country' (Ibid.).

In many ways, directly linked to the sensemaking of the Schleyer kidnapping (Chapter 4) and the sensemaking of September 11, 2001 (Chapter 5), the 'discursive anchor[ing]' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) of terrorist violence has rarely included political and public attention to far-right terrorism as an organised and structural problem and threat to Germany's ontological insecurity. Far-right terrorist attacks have often been treated politically as singular violent incidents and not as complex and structural terrorist attacks. Even the large-scale Oktoberfest-Bombing of 1980 by a former member of the neo-Nazi group Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann did not harness nearly as much political attention as the other events examined here. The NSU Affair speaks to the insufficient political attention. For further reading of Germany's far-right terror see: Kiess, Decker and Brähler 2016; Koehler 2016; Schmincke and Siri eds. 2013; Schultz 2018; Sundermeyer 2012.

Merino 2019, p. 561), for example, set by the events discussed in Chapter 4 and 5, helped to establish institutional biases in investigations of terrorist activity.

The academic focus on Islamist extremist terrorist events since September 11, 2001, is complicit in and helps to substantiate, practices of ‘discursive anchor[ing]’ (Ibid.). In this way, this thesis, even if examining these practices critically, is an implicit contribution to them: ‘From the perspective of discursive anchoring, then, such critical scholarship contributes to – rather than untwines – their cognitive association with the notion of terrorism’ (Ibid., p. 566). However, in selecting the events, the bias of case selection is also an inherent advantage for this research. Because a coherent evaluation of whether and which attacks are terrorist attacks depends on the choice of definition, this thesis focuses on those events that were clearly, and cross-parliamentary understood as terrorist attacks and as ‘critical situations’ (Ejdus 2020, p. 2).

### 3.3. Data and Data Selection

Official political discourse consists of narrative practices conducted by individuals who officially participate in the exercise of power and who assume to speak for a collective; in this case, the state. To recall the discussion in Chapter 2, state leaders and political actors speak for a collective, be it for the state, the government, an opposition, or a party. Irrespective of individual standpoints and differences between political actors ‘they ... share the same collective commitment to ... self-identity’ (Steele 2008a, pp. 18-19). Ejdus (2020, p. 12) further clarifies that ‘treating states as ontological security seekers can provide an account of some macro-level patterns of state behaviour’.

Depending on each case, the analysis focuses on the German Chancellor, different ministers and government officials. The official discourse data further includes an analysis of narrative material by lead opposition actors from different political parties on the Federal as well as the State (*Länder*) level. Owing to Germany’s decentralised system and its legislative architecture, the *Länder* can decisively influence the Federal legislative process, in particular, when a different majority than parliament constitutes the German Federal Council (*Bundesrat*). For a comparative and consistent analysis of official political discourse, parliamentary debates in the Federal Parliament (*Bundestag*) serve as a point of departure. They further provide the groundwork for establishing a longitudinal dataset that reflects on long-term narrative structures.

### 3.3.1. Primary Dataset and Parliamentary Speeches

For each event under examination, the initial dataset consists of all parliamentary debates that reference the German search word “terrorism” (*Terrorismus*) in the legislative period during and after each event. The initial dataset serves as the point of departure for further research in each case. The German parliaments’ online archives (*Dokumentations- und Informationssystem für Parlamentarische Vorgänge*, DIP) store parliamentary procedures and allow for filtering data by legislative period and types of parliamentary procedures. The dataset consists of 581 parliamentary debates that reference the search word “terrorism” in the legislative periods during and after each event (see Appendix B). The extension to legislative periods after each event broadens the timespan to capture longer-term sensemaking of and reactions to each event. Each parliamentary debate is accessible as a download and filed by the respective parliamentary document number, which also appears in the references to parliamentary debates in each chapter.

In limiting the search word to “terrorism”, the dataset intentionally restricts the focus to those debates that explicitly discuss terrorist events and, further, that political actors explicitly label and address as terrorism. To be sure, multiple search words, such as “extremism”, “violence” and “radicalism” can point to terrorism. This thesis, however, is specifically concerned with acts that political actors unequivocally narrate as acts of terrorism. It follows that it does not seek to evaluate the appropriateness of ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) or speaks to evaluating whether the dataset should include other events.

In the words of Alexandra Homolar and Pablo Rodríguez-Merino (*Ibid.*, p. 564), definitions of terrorism and acts defined as terrorism, ‘deserve our attention ... because they provide the discursive setting in which the interpretation of an event as [a] terrorist act takes place’. The focus on the search word “terrorism” allows for a focus on debates that contribute to the forging of ‘discursive anchors’ (*Ibid.*, p. 561) around these events.

As practices of ‘discursive[ly] anchor[ing]’ (*Ibid.*) terrorist events rely on explicitly naming and labelling these events as terrorism, the expansion of search words to related notions such as radicalism would have led the focus away from the research objective. This thesis does not seek to examine the negotiation of identity narratives around events that political actors considered radical violent events or singular incidents of violence but events that they explicitly considered as terrorist attacks.

Further, while the search word “terrorism” incorporates all events that were considered terrorist attacks, the dataset still includes debates in which political actors contest definitions

of terrorism. After all, parliamentary procedures reflect on central debates among policymakers. The format of parliamentary debates speaks to the negotiation processes around such debates. For example, when actors seek to question the government's understanding of a terrorist event or lack thereof, these discussions will be part of the dataset.

In this way, the parliamentary debates still reflect broader dynamics of political debates, as actors seek to consolidate and negotiate views on, and definitions of, terrorist events. The dataset examined in this research includes almost half of all parliamentary debates (581 of 1195) in the legislative periods under examination and thus sufficiently reflects on parliamentary sensemaking more generally.

Why do parliamentary speeches and debates help the analysis of ontological security and identity narrative negotiation? While parliamentary debates do not reflect these processes alone, they can provide rich empirical data at the intersection of what has been discussed non-publicly in committee meetings and official political communication. Further to this, they condense the arguments made by political actors and thus mirror overall tendencies of identity narrative negotiation. Furthermore, parliamentary debates can provide insight into how narrative negotiation processes are discussed and enacted through the legislation that follows events. For practices of 'discursive anchor[ing]' (Ibid.), parliamentary discussions are a crucial reflection of how events are made use of to inform policies and to warp identity narratives around these policies. Even more, parliamentary debates provide a comparative dataset that allows for a context-specific examination of events as well as comparing the events' sensemaking in time and amongst each other. The comparative element is important because it can reveal how previously set 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.) influence readings of terrorist violence in the future.

The analysis of parliamentary debates also allows for the extraction of dominant and frequent speakers on an event and their role in narrative sensemaking processes. The analysis of each parliamentary debate thus also identifies the main actors, whose reactions and narrative projections are then also traced in secondary data. This chapter will go in detail on how each parliamentary debate is analysed in section 3.4. and will discuss how secondary material is sourced in the subsequent section.

Further, each parliamentary debate intertextually references documents that are subject to discussion in the debate, such as draft bills, resolution proposals or commissioned reports. Based on their relevance in the parliamentary debates, this study includes them for narrative analysis. Three guiding questions establish relevance: (1) Is the referenced document subject to discussion and contestation among actors? (2) Can the referenced document add

perspective to the events because it pertains to the event's analysis? (3) Does the referenced document elucidate on event contestation or questions actors in parliament?

### 3.3.2. Additional Data and Media Ecologies

This study examines a range of additional sources to supplement the initial dataset because parliamentary debates cannot sufficiently reflect on broader trends in narrative projection and reception. They also insufficiently cover contextual and historical background. The secondary data is sourced based on the narrative analysis of the parliamentary debates (see section 3.4.). The data collection for additional sources varies from event to event because the accessibility of information varies. In addition to the themes identified in the narrative analysis, this section will discuss how additional data for each case study is selected by accounting for the existing media ecology at the time of each event. It follows that examining how political actors work through media structures requires a brief overview of the prevalent media environment at the time of the event. Each empirical case chapter will provide a more context-specific description of the prevalent media ecology and its implication for narrative projection and reception. It follows that this chapter will only provide information on media ecology, where it is relevant to the data selection process.

In identifying immediate reactions to each event – bearing in mind the limitation of accessibility – it is essential to clarify that changing media ecologies also change the range of actors involved in, and commenting on, the immediate sensemaking of an event. As Cameron Thies (2002, p. 356, italics in original) cautions: ‘The first thing to realize as you begin to select your primary sources is that in many ways they have selected *you*’.

Drawing on additional sources ‘involves the in-depth investigation of an issue or aspect of the data, that was not addressed or was only partly covered, in the original research’ (Heaton 2008, p. 510). In expanding on the data selection of supplementary sources, it is vital to emphasise the primary concern of this research. It does not focus comprehensively on the reception of narratives by audiences because it goes beyond the scope of this thesis. However, this study does focus on how actors project narratives through the media landscape during each event. This research is, therefore, interested in how ‘skilful political actors ... grasp that power works *through*’ these media environments (O’Loughlin, Miskimmon and Roselle 2017, p. 36, italics in original). The aim of this methodological approach is, thus, not to examine projection and reception comprehensively. Instead, it focuses on how political actors seek to construct shared meaning and how this meaning is projected through the media landscape. In

the examination of the initial dataset, this study identifies three shortcomings that are addressed by supplementary analysis of additional material:

- (1) The analysis of narratives that actors deploy does not speak to formation or projection. More contextual data is needed, on the political system, the historical context, preferences and ideological background of political actors, their external pressures and communicative preferences.
- (2) The analysis of the initial dataset does not give sufficient historical context more generally and cannot speak to the broader context in which the event happened and how the event came to be critical in this context. Further sources provide a more comprehensive depth, particularly for historical analysis, of these contexts. They, therefore, require examination.
- (3) The initial dataset cannot sufficiently provide information on broader trends of narrative projection through the media landscape. Further sources can address the shortcomings of the initial dataset, especially when the link to political actors is obscure (a newspaper quotes political actors, but the interview is not part of the official list provided by the German government); when the deployed data collection yields insufficient material (newspapers of the 1970s are often only available in non-digital archives, not subject to analysis in this work); when a comprehensive examination of all data is not within the scope of the research (it is not feasible to provide a comprehensive media data analysis of all three events); or when data is inaccessible (non-transcribed interviews with actors).

During the late 1970s and the Schleyer kidnapping, the media environment is best captured by the term ‘Broadcast Era’ (Merrin 2014), which means that dominant narrative projection channels for the event were radio, national television and print press. For research on the Schleyer kidnapping, this thesis starts by tracing initial reactions to the event through documented official communication, especially information published in the aftermath of the event. Official communication includes official reports (Bundespresse- und Informationsamt 1977) as well as archival information on and of initial reactions, for example, in digitalised media data. This thesis dominantly relies on information that is available online by searching through relevant parliamentary, party and media archives.

In the Schleyer case, the media data selection focuses dominantly on newspaper archives. At the time of the Schleyer kidnapping, the newspaper landscape in Germany was less diverse than it is today, which limits the available sources. For Chapter 4, the data selection process focuses on the most prominent newspapers and magazines, such as *Bild*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)* and *Der Spiegel* and limits the time frame to one month after police forces found Schleyer dead (September 5 to November 19, 1977). *Der Spiegel* stores all former magazines online, and the relevant timeframe can be selected in the archival search on the Spiegel’s website. For *Bild* and *FAZ*, this thesis relies on published

material in secondary literature. It further uses published material to search more specifically for relevant newspaper editions that are available online. Further, news media have published daily summaries of press publications during the Schleyer kidnapping (for example *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 2017, *Deutsche Welle* 2017) for the 40-year anniversary of the Schleyer kidnapping in 2017. When sourcing media data from secondary material, this thesis relies on media data that scholars cite most frequently to ensure that the sources have been verified. The starting point for sourcing secondary material is the comprehensive edited volume on the Red Army Faction (RAF) by Wolfgang Kraushaar (ed. 2006) encompassing sixty-four chapters by different authors.

Further secondary data draws on historical literature on the 1968 movement and the 1970s more broadly. This thesis sources contextual data by beginning with the most recent publications and working its way backwards through references. Thies (2002, p. 362) suggests that '[r]ecent articles and monographs will highlight "facts" that have stood the test of time, as well as revisions to prior accounts'. While the critical stance would argue that historical research is not free of constructed narratives and as such facts are always subject to their contextualisation and embedment in narrative accounts of history, Thies (Ibid.) points to an important practical aspect of sourcing secondary material. Because the most recent works will also include discussions on how previous works have fallen short, they will indicate avenues and pathways to explore – even if in some cases the most recent work is not inherently convincing.

In summary, the focus on sourcing secondary material for the Schleyer case seeks to provide a more comprehensive picture of the narrative cycle with a particular focus on narrative formation and projection. In sourcing secondary material for the Schleyer case, this thesis is principally interested in reviewing how themes and 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around the Schleyer kidnapping were projected into the media landscape and how the media landscape reflected and negotiated them. More than in the other two cases, this thesis relies on data that is available in the secondary literature and that is confirmed by how frequent scholars cite this material. Each source extracted from the secondary literature is cross-checked and verified when used for the analysis in this chapter.

9/11 happened at the end of the 'Broadcast Era' (Merrin 2014). It has been considered to have symbolised the introduction of the 'Diffused War', in which the width and scope of media channels expanded and which 'create[d] immediate and unpredictable' (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2010, p. 1) connections between a wide range of actors. While 9/11 symbolised the starting point for the 'Diffused War' (Ibid.), much of its immediate sensemaking was still

guided by the media logic of the ‘Broadcast Era’ (Merrin 2014). It follows that this thesis focuses on the immediate sensemaking and narrative projection and reception on TV and in newspapers, with some inclusion of online content.

In sourcing secondary data on 9/11, this thesis starts with what was available to politicians and audiences as the event occurred; namely, TV live reporting of 9/11 as it unfolded. Transcripts of the first six hours of live reporting (Weller 2002) of the three main channels *Das Erste* (ARD), *Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen* (ZDF) and *Radio Télévision Luxembourg* (RTL) provide a meaningful background for assessing initial reactions and narrative sensemaking processes by politicians and media alike. The review of the first six hours seeks to compare the parliamentary sensemaking through time with what occurred as the immediate narrative sensemaking, not least where political actors initially drew from TV channels (see Weller 2002). The review also includes press conferences and initial reactions by leading politicians.

For newspapers, print and online media, this chapter draws on the cover pages the day after the attack of all major newspapers and magazines in Germany, including *FAZ*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Bild*, *DIE ZEIT*, *Der Tagesspiegel*, *Der Spiegel*, and *Focus*. This chapter corroborates media data by drawing on archival research of material published by major newspapers and online news media that is available online, most dominantly *FAZ*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Bild*, *ZEIT*, *Der Tagesspiegel*, *taz*, and *Der Spiegel*. All newspapers and magazines reflect a broad political spectrum and thus also reflect differences in negotiating narratives formed by political actors around the events.

While this chapter draws on media data up until 2004, it does not systematically review every single article that has been published on 9/11 as it goes beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, this research looks specifically at moments around landmark decisions discussed in parliament, such as reactions to 9/11, the deployment of troops to Afghanistan and the discussion around participating in the Iraq War. The focus on landmark decisions also mirrors the focus on understanding how political actors project narratives through the media landscape, where these decisions require communication. In sourcing the media material, the selection process engages search words tied explicitly to these landmark decision, such as “11. September 2001” (“September 11, 2001”), “9/11”, “Afghanistan-Einsatz” (“Afghanistan mission”), “Afghanistankrieg” (“war in Afghanistan”), “Bundeswehr in Afghanistan”, “Irakkrise” (“Iraq crisis”) and “Irakkrieg” (“war in Iraq”). Further to this, the selected data focuses specifically on viewing how journalists reflect on or negotiate governmental and

oppositional narratives, which are most dominantly found in editorials, think pieces, op-eds and more substantial reports.

A third starting point for additional material for Chapter 5, is the *Sonderheft der Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik* book series (ZFAS), which provides an overview in 48 chapters of research on the ‘World After 9/11’ (Jäger ed. 2011, translated by author). The analysis focuses in particular on how secondary material examines the central themes that have emerged from the narrative analysis.

In summary, available data and secondary material on 9/11 is vast and requires a specific focus related to the central objective of this case study, which is to understand the production and narrative construction around 9/11 in more detail. The focus rests dominantly on German-language material, although where English academic literature provides essential insights, it is also included. In sourcing secondary data, this research seeks to understand more thoroughly how themes and narratives that formed around 9/11 were projected through the German media landscape and with which effect on ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around the events. The secondary material sourced can reveal more about the projection of narratives and ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) around terrorism because they reflect comprehensively on the means available to political actors to project narratives around 9/11.

The Berlin truck attack happened during the media ecology that Hoskins and O’Loughlin (2015, p. 1320) describes as ‘Arrested War’. In the ‘Arrested War’ media ecology, ‘professional media ... and institutions have found ways to arrest the once-chaotic social media dynamics’ (Ibid.). Crucially, this media ecology fosters the engagement with an event immediately, instantaneously and globally. Live feeds on social media, media channels and live commentaries on Twitter and Facebook enable a wide range of audiences to take part in and contribute to narrative formation processes. The arrested nature of this media ecology speaks to how political actors find ways to engage with this media environment and how narrative formation by political actors can also be traced through analytical engagement with social media.

In sourcing additional material on the Berlin truck attack (Chapter 6), this research starts by reviewing TV specials – similarly to Chapter 5 – of the dominant TV channels ARD, ZDF and RTL (Fischer and Wolf 2020). It reviews how, when and in which way TV channels disrupted their daily schedules to comment on and contribute to the narrative formation process as the event unfolded. Most dominantly, this research will evaluate how themes and ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around the events are set

or substantiated from the minute TV channels start to report on the events – even when it had not been confirmed that the attack was a terrorist attack. This data is crucial because it can reveal how actors instigate processes of sensemaking and produce the meaning of an attack, even when it is not clear as to whether the event falls into the category of terrorist violence more broadly.

In acknowledgement of the media ecology, the research for this chapter further traces initial reactions by lead political actors on social media, such as Twitter (and less so, Facebook), where most of the initial reactions happened. Chancellor Merkel, for example, only spoke at a press conference the day after the Berlin truck attack, yet the government's spokesperson Steffen Seibert (2016) reacted promptly after the news of the Berlin truck attack broke. Each tweet is available on the verified accounts of each actor, although in some cases, actors have changed their governmental functions and deleted their accounts or tweets. In these cases, this thesis draws on additional sources, such as tweet collections by media outlets, produced shortly after the event and frequently part of the “live-feed” of the event (Michels and Hanfeld 2016). Further, this thesis traces dominant hashtags on Twitter that accompanied the event as identified by media reports on the social media landscape and where they reflect on narrative formation processes by political actors. Where hashtags are identified, this research traces all tweets from December 19, 2016, to December 31, 2019, through Twitter's search function (<https://twitter.com/explore>).

Further to social media reactions, this thesis draws on official communication that is available online and forms part of government communication strategies. For the Berlin truck attack, this data is easily accessible through the Federal government's website (<https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/service/publikationen>) by entering the search word “terrorism” (*Terrorismus*) and selecting the time frame. This research selects data from the event on December 19, 2016, to the end date of data collection December 31, 2019. The dataset includes 365 articles, interviews, press conferences, press statements, speeches, governmental addresses and videos. Each of these data points is reviewed and used in cases where they provide contextual benefits. The reasons for the singular search word “terrorism” are the same as they are for the selection of the initial dataset. The purpose of reviewing this dataset is not to apply the same level of narrative analysis as for the parliamentary data, but instead to identify common themes and avenues of narrative projection.

This research sources additional media data for the Berlin truck attack through desktop research and online news research of dominant online media outlets, *Bild.de*, *n-tv.de*, *Der Spiegel*, *Focus Online*, *Welt*, *FAZ.NET*, *Süddeutsche.de*, *Stern*, *RTL.de*, and *ZEIT Online*. In

each case, data is collected through the search function of each website by searching for search words such as “Breitscheidplatz”, “Anschlag Berlin” (“Berlin attack”), “Anschlag Weihnachtsmarkt” (“Christmas Market Attack”). The news outlets are well recognised as opinion-makers for political elites and society alike (Weischenberg, Malik and Scholl 2005) and represent a broad political spectrum.

The depth of media and communication data also seeks to counter the fact that there exists to date no extensive secondary academic literature on the event. Only three studies were found that make the Berlin truck attack explicit case studies (Rabenschlag 2020; Von Münchow and Hantschke 2017; Dörner and Vogt eds. 2020). The truck attack also features in academic literature investigating counterterrorism practices (Goertz 2018), the economics of border enforcement and visa regimes (see Avdan 2019) and organised crime in comparative perspective (Geske and Sinn eds. 2019).

In examining a wide range of narrative projection channels, the research for this case study seeks to trace means, practices and avenues of narrative projection that speak to processes of narrative construction around the Berlin truck attack. Owing to the range of examined sources, the research in this case study also seeks to reflect on dynamics of sensemaking in the media ecology of the ‘Arrested War’ (Hoskins and O’Loughlin 2015).

### 3.4. Data and Narrative Analysis

Narrative analysis is well established as a method of critical inquiry (Abolafia 2010; Czarniawska 2004; Polkinghorne 1988; Shenhav 2005a; 2005b; Wibben 2011), although it differs widely in terms of its analytical patterns and process. Examples include Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough 1989; 1995; Fowler, Hodge and Kress 1979; Wodak and Chilton eds. 2005) and Political Semiosis (Griffin 1993; Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Lotman 1990; Wagner-Pacifici 2010). Narrative analysis is also a discrete method (Chase 2005; Reinhartz 1992; Riessman 2008).

Narrative analysis takes narratives as the object of study and is concerned with narrative structure, content, and their function in communication as presented through text, media text, picture, film, music, buildings and geographical environment (Elliott 2005; Crossley 2000; Linde 2001; Lyons and Coyle 2007; Flick, von Kardorff and Steinke eds. 2004). Ejodus (2020, p. 2), for example, notes:

Material environments such as core territorial areas for example, but also landmark natural or urban landscapes, need to be discursively linked to the project of the state self. Once this

process is accomplished, material environments become “ontic spaces”, or spatial extensions of the collective self that cause state identities to appear more firm and continuous.

Material environments reflect on how processes of formal representations of a collective manifest and substantiate through traces, evidence and material practices. Felix Berenskoetter and Bastian Giegerich (2010, p. 427) caution that ‘an emotional state of heightened anxiety is difficult to observe’. Therefore, researchers in ontological security ‘rely on a variety of rhetorical indicators found in official speeches and policy documents’ (Ibid.).

This thesis analyses each parliamentary debate of the initial dataset (see section 3.3.1.) as part of a wider project to identify agency and movement in the negotiation of identity narratives around critical events. This study will analyse each parliamentary debate manually by grouping statements into either of four categories: anxiety; temporality; agency; and identity narrative negotiation. While Margaret G. Hermann (2008) challenges the assumption that computer-assisted coding cannot be sensitive to contexts, this thesis argues that manual grouping of statements allows for the nuances necessary to understand the “fuzzy” concepts examined here, as well as where actors place silences. This research explicitly does not “code” single words that reference either of the markers discussed below, although some words might indicate that a statement falls into one of these groups. Single words or concepts are not narratives; that is, they need to be woven into narratives. The “War on Terror” narrative, for example, is not only powerful because it reads terrorism as a war but also because it ties problem, solutions, behaviour, actors and scene in meaningful ways. A comprehensive – non-structural – narrative analysis embraces the complexity instead of simplifying it through coding.

In grouping each parliamentary debate into the four categories, the analysis focuses specifically on content and focus of narratives by examining problem, resolution and the positioning of the *Self* (also in relation to the *Other*) within a narrative. While a ‘resolution is supposed to mark the change in the middle of the narrative as significant and relate back to its beginning’ (Wibben 2011, p. 51), it is equally important to note where narratives do not offer marked changes or resolutions but instead seek to substantiate and emphasise existing narratives. In the narrative analysis in this research, the focus on resolution does, therefore, rest on how actors express a desire for a future – either through reiteration, restoration or redescription (see Chapter 1). For Jonathan Culler (1997, p. 92), ‘[t]he pleasure of narrative is linked to desire’. In this way, a narrative analysis zooms in on how ‘[p]lots tell of desire and what befalls it’ and how a narrative ‘is driven by desire in the form of “epistemophilia”, a desire to know’ (Ibid.). Where the expression of desired futures, links to the *Self* and the anxiety as understood through the event, narrative analysis can capture these moments

analytically. In focusing on theme and focus, the narrative analysis selects statements that speak specifically to themes and foci of an actor's narrative sensemaking.

In the process of grouping statements, it is important to note that a narrative approach to text requires continued engagement with the 'referential context that is simultaneously linguistic, literary, historical, biographical, social and political' (Lanser 1991, p. 614), which is also where secondary data is necessary. Coding, concepts, words, or terms specific to a narrative does not reveal how context concepts, words or terms were invoked. Actors can criticise, reiterate, emphasise, and question concepts. For example, in this research, the "maturity narrative" was a central means to make sense of September 11, 2001, but actors alluded to the concept of maturity in different ways featuring themes and metaphors of adulthood and becoming. Further, while pre-structured coding might have helped to explore the range of possible ways in which political actors constructed the maturity narrative, it would be less suitable to explore the link to event temporality and anxiety – key notions in this research.

In analysing the sensemaking of an event as a narrative process rather an instance, this thesis further proposes attention to 'counternarratives' where they 'are not simple contestations of the dominant narratives' but where they '[function] to sustain' (Wibben 2011, p. 57) dominant narratives. In focusing on moments of negation and contestation, the narrative analysis seeks to examine the complex interaction of narrative sensemaking processes.

Each parliamentary debate is summarised in a summary sheet that also takes note of time, place, agenda and speaker list of each debate. In focusing on actors specifically, each summary sheet lists the dominant speakers, a summary of the discussion and further documents worth examining. In providing the contextual summary, the summary sheets provide a practical means to compare data, especially where the analysis of parliamentary debates seeks to inform the selection of secondary data.

For an analytical grasp of identity negotiation and a 'thick description' (Geertz 1973) of the complex process of identity negotiation through events, the four markers below need to be present in order to establish an understanding of agentic movement; that is identity narrative negotiation for which supporting evidence will be necessary and sourced through secondary material. Further, each speech in each parliamentary debate is "coded" through these analytical markers to compare how each analytical marker is present and how. Each analytical marker represents a different aspect of movement in the identity negotiation process that reflects the theoretical argument in this thesis:

**Anxiety:** This study seeks to connect evidence of identity narrative negotiation to narrations of uncertainty, anxiety and rupture to contextualise the negotiation processes. Anxiety closely links to temporality (see below) but this analytical marker examines explicitly how a political actor expresses anxiety, and how actors narrate the event as questioning the ontological status of the state. Effectively, this analytical marker can be derived from the question: For whom, by whom and how does the event threaten the ontological status of the state?

Key notions underlying “coding” processes for anxiety are expressions of shame, concern, uncertainty, danger, threat, fear, and “moods”.

**Temporality:** Temporality and the expression of ‘tempo-spatial situatedness’ (Berenskoetter 2014, p. 262) is an additional marker for narrative analysis. As discussed (see Chapter 2), Berenskoetter (2020, p. 277) sees ‘temporality as the framework within which anxiety arises’. The analysis of temporal claims (see Jarvis 2008; 2009), is a crucial aspect of strategic narratives and their link to ontological security. Researchers interested in examining temporal claims have a range of tools at their disposal to do so. For Lee Jarvis (2008, p. 246), attention to how temporality is “written” for strategic purposes helps to grapple with ‘the persuasiveness of ... pervasive political discourse’. Threats, anxiety and ontological insecurity all rely on temporal claims because existential threats require an understanding of a threat within a temporal scope. Narratives, in turn, give meaning to the ‘tempo-spatial situatedness’ (Berenskoetter 2014, p. 262) of actors. Effectively, this analytical marker can be derived from the question: In which way do actors narrate the temporality of the event, for example by suggesting linearity, rupture or timelessness?

Key notions underlying “coding” processes for temporality are expressions of the event as singularity or series, rupture or continuity, past, present, future, speed, lived experience and urgency.

**Agency:** This category examines how actors narrate the ‘purview of the agency’ (Steele 2008a, p. 73), how they do so and with which implications for the narration of the state more broadly. It further examines how actors express an understanding of their ability to be an agent; that is, do actors express an ability to be an agent in a ‘critical situation’ (Ejdus 2020, p. 2). Do actors express, instead, that structural processes determine the outcome and that they have little control over these outcomes. This analytical marker further investigates how actors seek to enact an event’s strategic narratives and identity narrative negotiation through material practices, such as policies and commemoration practices. Narrative enactment links closely to ‘anxiety-controlling mechanisms’ (Giddens 1984, p. 50; see also Kinnvall 2004a). They serve to substantiate and confirm narratives, at the same time at which they carry narrativity themselves. Adjusting Ejdus’ (2020, p. 5) conceptualisation of ‘ontic spaces’, narrative enactment serves the ‘projection of state identity narratives’ and ‘introjection’ of these enactments ‘into state identity narratives’. The process here is twofold: Narrative enactment serves as a means to realise agency, to demonstrate it and to materialise it in practices that are familiar to audiences. At the same time, practices of narrative enactment carry their distinct narrativity and therefore can serve to substantiate narratives when linked to them. Narrative enactment points to the ‘internal vulnerability arising from aesthetic power, which comes from the need to see it in action’ (Steele 2017, p. 112). In short, this analytical marker can be

traced by asking, how do actors propose to, and enact identity narratives? How does the enactment seek to ‘actualize’ (Steele 2008a, p. 19) which identity narrative commitments?

Key notions underlying “coding” processes for agency are expressions of redescription, reiteration or restoration of identity narratives. Further notions include expressions of expectations, responsibility, role of the state and appropriateness and justification for policies.

***Identity Narrative Negotiation:*** Differently to Alister Miskimmon, Ben O’Loughlin and Laura Roselle (2017, p. 2) this research considers system, issue, and value narratives to form identity narratives. This research establishes the concept of value narratives as an additional category because it argues that system and issue narratives are different from identity narratives. Instead, system and issue narratives form part of identity narratives; they can always be linked to identity narratives, which is not the case for identity narratives. Identity narratives do not necessarily have to include system or issue narratives. Identity narratives ‘carry a desire for a particular social order and a particular set of social practices and policies’ (Subotić, 2016, p. 612). Value narratives express ‘desire’, system narratives ‘carry a desire for a particular social order’ and issue narratives specify a ‘particular set of social practices and policies’ (Ibid.). All three narrative forms contribute to overarching identity narratives because they mirror different aspects of an identity narrative. In addition to identity narrative negotiation, this marker identifies where actors link ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) to processes of identity narrative negotiation, including anchors around the nature of terrorist violence, the nature of the state’s response and the role of the state more broadly. Effectively, this analytical marker can be derived from the question: How do actors link value, system and issue narratives to the identity commitments and representations of a given state toward a formulation identity narratives?

Key notions underlying “coding” processes for identity narrative negotiations are found in the synthesis of the markers above, characterisations of the *Self* in relation to the international system and the *Other* as repeated or redescription through time. Repetitions speak to the substantiation of ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.), whereas redescriptions speak to attempts to setting new ones.

While facilitating the methodological process of contextualisation, the analytical markers ensure the coherency and consistency of this thesis’ findings. Each summary sheet also includes a summary of dominant themes and foci of each marker. The categories help to operationalise and realise the theoretical model of this thesis by guiding through different events, in different historical periods. They allow for comparative analysis across these diverse contexts, without infringing upon the critical methodological commitment to ‘ongoing and evolving learning’ (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, p. 55). In reflecting on the comparative use of these analytical markers, this thesis will summarise each in the conclusion of the case study chapters. These summaries will be brought together in the overall conclusion

for a comparative picture as to the necessary conditions for, and processes of, identity narrative negotiation (Chapter 7). The conclusion of this thesis, will further disentangle each marker and reflexively propose sub-categories as derived from the empirical case studies that can be used for further research.

After grouping statements into these four analytical categories, and summarising dominant themes of each group, the narrative analysis proceeds by comparing summary sheets to identify broader themes and repetitions of statements that substantiate these themes. Further, the analysis identifies how actors make sense of each analytical marker. For example, an expression of anxiety cannot yet reveal much about how anxiety is made sense of, in which context, and with which implications for the identity narrative negotiation process. Are actors referencing anxiety specifically around the event, or do actors narrate a more structural systemic anxiety within which the event is placed? Similarly, how do actors make sense of agency and how do they narrate the scope of agency by which means? In comparing the analytical markers through time, the analysis looks specifically for repetitions and how they speak in particular to reiterative processes of sensemaking. The comparative analysis further identifies silences; that is where statements exclude potentially viable alternative explanations by asking the counterfactual question to those repetitions examined in the narrative analysis. For example, if an event is continuously referred to as an act of war, the analysis asks which alternative readings could have been offered in the absence of an act of war narrative. Common themes and repetitions point in particular to an expression of intent, especially if these repetitions are carried or modified through time.

In examining themes, foci, repetitions and silences in comparative perspective, the analysis also examines where actors chose to break with repetitions and silences; that is where new themes and narratives emerge and around which moment in time and with which link to the event. In doing so, the narrative analysis seeks to identify changes to narrative sensemaking processes. In having identified common themes and where changes to narrative sensemaking occur, the narrative analysis also provides the groundwork for further research on secondary material. After sourcing the secondary material (see section 3.3.2.), it is processed by a three-fold approach: First, this thesis reviews secondary material to identify broader and common themes in the material, especially where they reflect or negotiate the themes of the analysis of parliamentary debates. Second, the analysis of secondary material collects statements that reflect on these common themes in an exemplary manner. Statements are then categorised and sorted by where they occur in and reflect on the narrative cycle of formation, projection and reception. Third, secondary material is processed by marking

intertextual references to other secondary material, from which further secondary material is sourced and processed accordingly.

Because the analysis of narrative projection and reception is at heart an exercise in tracing the common themes and silences through projection and communication channels, the analysis focuses specifically on how they are discussed and how they reflect on how narratives travel through the narrative cycle. For example, if a common theme in the parliamentary debates references generational narratives, the analysis of media data and secondary material more broadly, will focus specifically on whether this narrative is reflected, silenced or negotiated by whom and how. In processing secondary data, the research will review additional points and include statements that speak in particular to the nature and theme of that additional data point.

## 3.5. Limitations and Transparency

This thesis acknowledges the limitations of how data and secondary material is sourced and how narrative analysis can facilitate an examination of the production of meaning. The following section will address these limitations and, where possible, point to how this thesis seeks to counter these limitations.

### 3.5.1. Limits of Data and Secondary Material

This study shares many of the methodological caveats of qualitative historical analysis in IR (see Thies 2002), mainly where secondary material provides data for case study research: ‘One general risk of this method is selective reconstruction of the event to support a favored theory by underpinning evidence inconsistent with the theory supporting an alternative’ (Odell 2001, p. 164). John S. Odell’s (Ibid.) caution is particularly valid when historical analysis in specific issue areas complements the initial dataset. For example, narrative media analysis (Graef 2020), might share epistemological and ontological assumptions with a researcher interested in discourse because the study of narratives assumes shared commitments to understanding the production of meaning. Further to this, academic sources selected based on a specific perspective might more likely engage with references to academic work closely linked to this approach. In acknowledging the caveats of selectivity and bias, this research sources supplementary material on the basis of two guiding assumptions:

First, while selectivity and bias are essential to acknowledge, the critical approach understands bias not as inherently detrimental to a research project. Instead, the critical approach understands bias as inevitable, given the socio-linguistically constructed reality. It follows that '[i]nterpretative researchers and methodologists dispute the possibility of disembodied research as if all researchers were interchangeable' (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, p. 98; see section 3.5.).

Second, while understanding that selectivity and bias impose limitations as to the establishment of causality, research is still "measured" by how it provides transparent and coherent explanations. Kevin C. Dunn (2008, pp. 90-91) writes that there are 'two important issues to consider when judging the validity of one's interpretations': that there 'is supporting evidence to back up ... claims' and 'that the validity of one's interpretation can be measured by its logical coherence does not imply that there is an objective measure of logical coherence'.

Further, the non-comprehensive sourcing and analysis of media data – especially where it is guided by the themes that emerge from the parliamentary debates – might enable self-referential circles. Moreover, most of the sourced secondary material is drawn from online sources and thus may exclude archival material that has not yet been digitalised. However, the central reason for sourcing and examining secondary material is to understand how actors project narratives into the media environment and work through the media landscape. Where media outlets make sense of narrative processes, it is further important to note that this thesis does not intend to provide a comparative and systematic analysis of media sensemaking processes more broadly. Instead, it seeks to identify 'perspicuous instances' (Jalbert 1999, p. 41), 'intersecting in ways that exemplify and point towards regularities' (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2007, p. 6). It seeks out those instances that speak to how the meaning of an event was produced and how narratives were projected into the media landscape.

Further, an identification of such 'perspicuous instances' (Jalbert 1999, p. 41) focuses on the processes underlying narrative projection and can thus speak to how, for example, media outlets negotiate the narrative sensemaking processes by political actors around an event. Crucially, the focus here is on understanding the modes and themes of projection through media ecologies, not a systematic and comprehensive media narrative analysis. In this way, media data collection can trace modes and themes more flexibly without committing to an extensive media narrative analysis which goes beyond the scope of this thesis.

Moreover, the methodological framework of this study does not offer a systematic analysis of, and approach to, measuring narrative reception by audiences, although they are a crucial element to understanding how audiences identify with which narratives. As argued, however, this thesis focuses on understanding the construction of narratives and how they are projected. It does not comprehensively engage in discussions around how audiences receive these narratives through time. However, where audience research does not include an in-depth study of the cognitive and behavioural background of each person and where it is difficult to identify audiences as a homogenous group, a “half-way” solution would have not been helpful in identifying narrative reception. Scholars struggle with audience research (Hanshew 2016, pp. 385-386), precisely because it is very difficult to determine how an individual makes sense of the world and how an individual engages with narratives as they are projected. Some attempts have been made to understand reception through focus groups, interviews and the Q-Sort method (Miskimmon and O’Loughlin 2019). However, even the qualitative and in-depth commitments of these studies cannot escape the highly complex nature of questions on identity narrative ‘stickiness’ (Ibid.).

While this study acknowledges its limitation, it maintains that narrative reception more generally constitutes a problem in strategic narrative research. Understanding how world views, event readings, and identities are constituted cannot be mono-causally explained. Identity narratives are inherently complex, and so are their constitution and reception by audiences. Limiting the research to what can be operationalised thus also means not to assume explanatory validity over claims that strategic narrative scholars more generally grapple with. Moreover, while acknowledging the limitations, when provided through data from the supplementary analysis, some opinion polls, secondary literature or witness reports can indicate some aspects of narrative reception. This study makes use of these indicators where they provide the necessary contextualisation to narrative sensemaking.

### 3.5.2. The Knowability of Meaning and Validity, Reliability and Replicability in Interpretative Research

What may appear frustrating to positivist researchers, namely questions concerning the knowability of meaning, creates exciting opportunities for narrative scholars. This thesis, therefore, rejects the claim that qualitative research and critical inquiry are in crisis (see Hammersley 2008), notwithstanding the need for methodological transparency more broadly. Because meaning is not determinate or settled, it is always open to contestation. Meaning,

therefore, is inherently political (Chabal and Daloz 2006). This point has been well established in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

However, a methodological framework needs to discuss the production and analysis of narratives in light of the knowability of meaning. Simply put, do agents mean what they say and how can research extract meaning from what actors say? To illustrate this problem, consider, for example, an authoritarian leader who in the course of dismantling democratic principles, draws on a democracy narrative. How can a narrative analysis reflect whether this narrative affects identity narratives when these identity narratives do not include commonly shared democratic principles? To complicate matters further, how can a narrative analysis reflect these narratives when a large part of audiences buys into and supports a democracy narrative that seeks to justify the abdication of democratic principles?

These questions become even trickier when events and concepts that form part of identity narratives are equipped with fewer resources to determine the accuracy of such a narrative. To recall on the previous example, democratic principles, although contentious, draw on a range of possible parameters for the “truthfulness” of such a narrative (for example, fair and transparent elections, non-violent transfer of power, checks and balances). What happens, however, in cases of more “fuzzy” narratives, for example, narratives on freedom, traditions and morality?

In addressing these caveats, it is first necessary to note that the invocation of a concept does not make a narrative. To be sure, actors and analysts can label and name narratives, but imperatively a narrative is constituted by a storyline that weaves this concept into a specific understanding of the world. In forging a narrative, actors must specify and express the meaning of a concept and situate this meaning within a broader story on actors and tools and behaviours. An actor’s expression of meaning can reveal the process of sensemaking. This specification is invaluable empirical data, irrespective of whether the sensemaking is, for example, hypocritical or not. Further and in line with the contention of this thesis, where actors invoke narratives, for example, on the value of democracy, they also co-produce the meaning and sensemaking of concepts that form part of these narratives. For identity narrative research, the principal concern is not that actors narrate an event for purposes of redescribing, reiterating or restoring a state’s identity narrative. Instead, the principal concern in this thesis is how and to which end.

Even more complicated, what some actors narrate as identity narrative redescription, others might narrate as identity narrative restoration. In the same way, what some actors narrate as change to identity narratives, others might narrate as continuity. Narratives do not

measure or reflect a world that is out there, through which research can assess their truthful account of this reality. Instead, narratives co-produce, and they are powerful tools to express, forge and make this reality. For this research, the focus is not on evaluating whether political actors “truthfully” reflect on an event as a crisis, but instead on how and to which end they do.

This study, therefore, focuses on the practices of ‘sensemaking’ and ‘sensegiving’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 575). Further, and as outlined in this chapter, it is possible to analyse how forged narratives align with their enactment. For participatory identification with narratives as sensemaking and sensegiving devices, they need to be credible and substantiated through narrative enactment (see Chapter 2).

For example, it will be difficult for an authoritarian leader who fashions a narrative that draws on democratic values, to harness persuasion power, if the narrative enactment does not fit this narrative. If, however, audiences buy into this narrative and identify with it, then it is a powerful meaning-making device. It will be powerful, irrespective of whether a narrative may or may not be hypocritical or whether actors do not mean what they say as reflected by narrative enactment that goes against a narrative. Even more, the success of populist candidates and parties, for example, has provided evidence for how compelling even inherently paradoxical narratives can be.

It follows that it has to be clear that this analytical model and methodological framework cannot measure “true” intentions – only their expression. Nevertheless, the content-specific examination will always have to consider the context of the utterance, that is, to acknowledge the temporal and spatial significance of the utterance. It follows that the context and enactment of different narratives also serve as tools to control for some of the questions surrounding the knowability of meaning.

For example, political actors can narrate a terrorist attack as a grave challenge to the integrity of a state. If, however, terrorist attacks occur in the context of an ongoing civil war, the implications of that narrative are decisively different from the context of peacetime. If the leader of an authoritarian state considers terrorist attacks as a fundamental threat to the state, yet, other actors classify these terrorist attacks as peaceful resistance then the narratives on the nature of the terrorist threat will attain a different meaning for different audiences.

Further, and, for example, in the context of the Brexit vote, a driver for “Leave” voters was that the referendum presented ‘a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to wreak revenge on “globalists” and the “liberal elite”’ (Dorey 2017, p. 38). At the same time, the “*Global Britain*” narrative has been a means to forge post-Brexit confidence ‘to meet the British public’s great power expectations’ (Harris 2018). A successful anti-establishment narrative,

driven by US President Donald Trump seems equally paradoxical in acknowledgement of his privileged upbringing.

Undeniably, the support for populist candidates depends on a multiplicity of factors and ill-reflect the level of complexity such a discussion would merit. However, the success and analysis of narratives do not imply a researcher's judgements on the truthfulness of an actor's intentions or the "true" meaning of an utterance. Instead, a narrative analysis needs to focus on *how* actors narrate meaning and how these narratives align with action and behaviour. This research asks what the claims to truthfulness made by actors around an event are. It follows that rather than the cause of frustration, these caveats point to the right questions of inquiry for an inductive and 'evolving' (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, p. 55) research project.

In testing the trustworthiness of research, positivist scholars commonly refer to "validity", "reliability", "objectivity" and "falsifiability" (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, p. 92) as standards. While interpretivist research can include and acknowledge these 'philosophical wagers' (Jackson 2011b), positivist and interpretivist research approach them differently both epistemologically and ontologically: 'The purpose of interpretive research ... is not model testing, but the understanding of human meaning-making in context; the goal is not to erase ambiguities, but to understand their sources' (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, p. 108). Instead, interpretivist research will point to (1) 'the consistency of evidence from different sources (the intertextuality of the analysis)'; (2) 'the ways in which conflicting interpretations have been engaged'; and (3) 'the logic with which the argument has been developed' (Ibid.).

These standards can address the caveats that come with the flexibility and openness of interpretivist research. In the words of Howard S. Becker (1998, p. 210), interpretivist researchers continuously 'refine the portrait of the whole – in order to offer, in the end, a convincing representation of its complexity and diversity'. While Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Dvora Yanow (2012, p. 94) argue that positivist standards of validity, reliability, objectivity and falsifiability are, 'ill-suited to interpretive research because it makes quite different assumptions about the stability of the social world', the reading of interpretivist research employed here, suggests that these standards are still useful quality-control mechanisms for interpretivist research. The difference, however, between positivist and interpretivist research is how these standards and criteria are evaluated and understood.

Validity establishes to which extent indicators can give answers to the research questions. In the case of ontological security and strategic narratives, the question is, which

indicators serve as referents for either ontological security negotiation or strategic narratives on state identity. The narrative analysis section (3.4.) addressed some of these issues by establishing four analytical markers for consistent and comparative narrative analysis. However, with identity narrative construction being a continuous process, a variety of “measurements” can indicate identity narratives at work. It follows that qualitative “measurements” of identity narratives always imply a choice. Validity not only refers to measuring what scholars think they are measuring but justifying why the choice of measurements is the preferred choice. This study offers one possible way to approach “measurements” for narrative analysis in ontological security but maintains that alternative approaches are possible.

### 3.5.3. Language and Researcher Bias

An additional limitation derives from the fact that all translations of parliamentary procedures, strategic narratives and textual data are by the author of this thesis. Critically, this thesis acknowledges the problems implicit in translating meaning in strategic narratives from German to English. Some references in German might not evoke similar socio-cultural connotations when translated. Some meaning might get lost in translation. However, this is partly why research on identity narratives is exciting. It is because language matters so fundamentally to how identity narratives are constructed and carried through time that research needs to be able to understand the processes underlying the narrative cycle. Further, this thesis aims to mitigate some of these shortcomings by addressing instances where a translation falls short in conveying meaning or where it is not possible to translate a term without contextually presenting the socio-linguistic significance of it.

Of course, this thesis concurs with Lene Hansen (2006, p. 16) in that ‘language is [not only] a linguistic capability, [but also] ... a social epistemology composed by a set of linked codes’. As such, different concepts will not only evoke different socio-cultural connotations, but they will also be understood from the vantage point of a researcher’s socio-cultural upbringing. They thus create an inherent bias for what is considered meaningful, remarkable or worth drawing attention to. This research aims to mitigate this bias to the extent possible. It has to be acknowledged, however, that there will always remain an inherent bias that no researcher can account for because this is the case with any research and any researcher’s individual setting and upbringing. Consequentially, this section acknowledges the limitations of translation, the possible analytical implications and researcher bias more broadly.

With these limitations in mind, however, this thesis argues that they do not diminish the need for a better understanding of the strategic negotiation of a state's ontological status. Because these negotiations have effects in the "real world" and because they target the very core of a state's logic and institutions, scholars need to find better ways to examine these processes.

# Chapter 4

## The Schleyer Kidnapping 1977

### Negotiating Identity Narratives and Democratic Viability

#### 4.1. Introduction

The German Autumn was a series of events initiated by the kidnapping of German industrialist Hanns Martin Schleyer on September 5, 1977, by the terrorist group Red Army Faction (RAF). They sought to blackmail the German state into releasing imprisoned members of the group. However, what followed was a six-week chase for Schleyer. When the government did not give in to the terrorists' demands, they hijacked the Lufthansa Landshut aeroplane with 86 passengers on board. Hostages were later successfully freed in Mogadishu, Somalia, by German special forces. Learning of the failed hijacking of the aeroplane – the details of how are to date unclear – the imprisoned RAF members committed collective suicide in the high-security prison Stuttgart-Stammheim. Schleyer was found dead on October 19, 1977, in an abandoned car near the German border in Mulhouse, France.

Founded in 1970, the RAF advocated the *Konzept Stadtguerilla* which had its historical predecessors and ideological roots in Mao Tse-Tung and Che Guevara. The group started with arson attacks on shopping malls and bank robberies. Police forces caught the ringleaders in 1972. With the imprisonment of the first-generation RAF members, part of the ideological reasoning of the RAF changed. The second-generation RAF members focused on getting their predecessors released. In doing so, they committed a series of attempts to

blackmail the state into their release. These included the attack on the West German Embassy in Stockholm (1975), the murder of State Attorney Siegfried Buback (1977), and the murder of the Chairman of the Dresdner Bank Jürgen Ponto (1977).

The Schleyer kidnapping further occurred against the backdrop of one of the most extensive court cases in German legal history against the imprisoned first-generation RAF members, which started on May 21, 1975. The so-called Stammheim trial provided a platform for the imprisoned first-generation RAF members to showcase their political ideology and demonstrate their commitment to the cause. Extensive media coverage and public attention accompanied the trial.

It is challenging to analyse the events of the German Autumn as distinct events. Part of the ‘air of oppression’ (Hanshew 2012a, p.192) surrounding the events stems from their historicisation through a specific historical narrative, namely that of the German Autumn. Further, the escalation and intensity of these events formed a cycle of violence; a cycle that spiralled upwards throughout the time of Schleyer’s abduction. It is therefore difficult to examine these events independently of each other.

The Schleyer kidnapping nevertheless stands out from the other events during the Autumn of 1977. Firstly, the Schleyer kidnapping was the moment at which ‘the cycle of violence produced an air of oppression now synonymous with West Germans’ experiences of that year and that [Autumn] in particular’ (Hanshew 2012a, p.192). Secondly, ‘[i]t was the RAF kidnapping of Hanns-Martin Schleyer in Cologne ... that encouraged many to rethink their position – on federal police powers and other counterterrorism practices as well’ (Hanshew 2012a, p. 208). Thirdly, (strategic) communication played a crucial role during the Schleyer kidnapping and the six weeks that followed it – for the terrorists and the state. The conservative opposition parties (CDU/CSU), for example, drew on Helmut Schelsky (in Treiber 1984, p. 321, translated by author) arguing that:

The oftentimes contemptuously called “dispute of words” is really a “battle of words” in which social relations and especially power relations are decided. It is, as is the “battle of laws” an inevitable political conflict of principle.

What were the stakes for political actors in these discussions? How did the Schleyer kidnapping provide an opportunity for political actors to decide on ‘social relations’ and ‘power relations’ (Ibid.), especially given Germany’s past which centrally featured in the uncertainties of the decade? It had only been 32 years since the end of Nazi rule, and the West German democracy was still in its “infancy”. Political actors still carried the responsibility to convince domestic and international audiences that West German democracy was there to last. The analysis of parliamentary debates reflects on the ‘battle of words’ in the negotiation

of ‘power relations’ (Ibid.). As will be explored in this chapter, the domestic focus and narrated link to prescriptions of social cohesion and uncertainty during West Germany’s “infancy”, provides an excellent opportunity to initiate the empirical examination of the argument made in this thesis. Further to this, the RAF terrorism was the first series of terrorist attacks that the young Republic had to grapple with, with the notable exception of the terror attack at the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972. It follows that the Schleyer kidnapping, in particular, provides a suitable starting point for assessing the theoretical argument, especially where political actors constructed ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) for terrorist violence around the Schleyer kidnapping.

This chapter will outline the context in which the Schleyer kidnapping occurred and introduce the main actors for the political sensemaking of the kidnapping. Most dominantly, the chapter will focus on Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland*, SPD) and opposition leader Helmut Kohl of the Christian Democratic Party (*Christlich Demokratische Union*, CDU), also heading the CDU/CSU faction in parliament, consisting of the CDU and the Christian Social Union (*Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern*, CSU). This chapter will begin by examining the narrative formation by these actors by expanding on how the trauma of the Weimar Republic influenced different actors. It will further explore the differences between Chancellor Schmidt and Helmut Kohl in the strategic narration of rupture. This chapter will continue by assessing how the nature of the attacks functioned as a means to forge an environment in which political actors negotiated identity narratives as linked to how actors tied root causes of terrorism to their proposed solutions. This chapter will further investigate the government’s narrative enactment and the opposition’s reaction to practices of narrative enactment.

In terms of the overall contention of this thesis, this chapter argues that political actors intensely negotiated German identity narratives around the events of the Schleyer kidnapping. In particular, the conservatives sought to strategically erode the ontological status of the state to restore the identity narrative commitments they narrated as lost while pursuing a conservative politics that advanced the notion of the “moral-ideological turn”. In doing so, they sought to re-establish boundaries for “rightful” civil and political conduct.

Notably, the Schleyer kidnapping set grounds for ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) on terrorism as from the political left and as directed against the state. In addressing the Schleyer kidnapping, the government further anchored an understanding of counterterrorism through narratives of the strong state that relied on social cohesion and specific readings of citizenship. They implicated the negotiation of identity

narratives and the attempt to prove democratic viability to domestic and international audiences. Moreover, political actors anchored counterterrorism through a resolute non-negotiation strategy with the terrorists; ultimately, at the cost of Schleyer's life. In the negotiation of state identity narratives and West German identity narrative commitments, anxiety played a crucial role. Anxiety, not only emanated from the events themselves, but also from more structural anxiety around the viability of the then-young West German democracy. The strictness and pervasiveness of 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.) around the Schleyer kidnapping, such is the overall contention in this chapter, rested decisively on the anxiety produced by the event in conjunction with more structural anxiety surrounding West German identity narratives. Where actors sought to settle this anxiety through 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.), they also attempted to settle identity narrative commitments around them.

## 4.2. Context: An Unsettled Decade

Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of the SPD took office in 1974 in a governing coalition with the Liberal Democrats (*Freie Demokratische Partei*, FDP). Global uncertainties had characterised the early 1970s. A year after President Nixon stepped down under the pressure of the Watergate Scandal, the US withdrew from Vietnam. The 1973 oil crisis revealed and highlighted global interdependencies. The collapse of the Bretton Woods system contributed to the economic turmoil of the 1970s (Hammes and Wills 2005) not least by reflecting on and instigating a period of uncertainty. These uncertainties unsettled the political elite in Bonn and Chancellor Schmidt (1976, 08/06, p. 113, translated by author) admitted in December 1976 that 'uncertainties somewhat characterise the situation ... and [that] the global economic developments worrie[d]' him.

Only 32 years after the end of WWII, West Germany had gained some confidence through its stellar economic success, the *Wirtschaftswunder*, but now it appeared that the West German economy became increasingly subject to global inflation and economic stagnation. Unemployment rose from 200,000 to 600,000 between 1969 and 1974. Chancellor Willy Brandt, who had mesmerizingly promised to "dare more democracy", stepped down in light of the "Guillaume Affair" in 1974.<sup>2</sup> Two days later, the SPD voted for Helmut Schmidt to replace him. The affair not only tainted efforts of Brandt's brainchild, the *Ostpolitik* but

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<sup>2</sup> When it was revealed that one of Brandt's political advisers, Günther Guillaume, was part of the GDR's secret service, it appeared that Brandt was forced to resign. Whether other reasons – including Brandt's deteriorating health – contributed to this decision is still discussed today (Merseburger 2013).

with his resignation, it appeared that his ‘change, vision and optimism’ (Dahlke 2011, p. 43, translated by author) had slowed down, if not come to a halt altogether. At the same time, Brandt’s vision for new political pathways included all-encompassing social reforms and policies, and they had instigated a political change in thinking about the state and its responsibilities. Further to this, ‘militant protests of new social movements’ (Weinhauer 2004, p. 222, translated by author) had done their part in questioning the coherence of West Germany’s identity narrative, even before the foundation of the RAF.

Indeed, the RAF formed as a violent branch out of these new social movements (see Musolff 2011), such as the 1968 student movement. What originated as global student movements against state oppression and the Vietnam War, soon translated into a critique of West Germany’s stagnant educational policies and society’s reluctant examination of its gruesome past. They demanded, ‘a more radical exposure of the ideological and institutional legacies of Nazism in West Germany than had been practised in the 1950s’ (Ibid., p. 62).

Whereas it is difficult to establish a causal link between the creation of the RAF and the student movement, the RAF would not have been possible without the social context from which it emerged (see Ibid.). Further to this, discussions around West German terrorism cannot be separated from the broader ‘transnational’ (Hanshew 2016) context of terrorism in Europe (see also de Graaf 2011; Hürter ed. 2015; Metzler 2015; Terhoeven 2014). When a police officer shot the student Benno Ohnesorg during a demonstration against the Shah of Iran in Berlin on June 2, 1967, discussions on the use of violence inside the New Left accelerated. A year later an assassination attempt of Rudi Dutschke, head of the German Association of Socialist Students (SDS), appeared to confirm the social movements’ fears that West Germany had been nothing short of a continuation of fascist violence. It also encouraged the resistance fighter image that the RAF founding members Andreas Baader, Ulrike Meinhof and Gudrun Ensslin later fashioned (see Bressan and Jander 2006).

All of the aforementioned structural factors influenced the political landscape that Chancellor Helmut Schmidt stepped into when taking office in May 1974. During his chancellorship and in this context, terrorism became increasingly politically relevant. Willy Brandt had not extensively focused on terrorism, despite the Munich attacks of 1972. Indeed, West German counterterrorism narratives only emerged with Chancellor Helmut Schmidt entering office (de Graaf 2010, p. 13). Strongly influenced by the siege of the West German Embassy in Stockholm and the kidnapping of CDU politician Peter Lorenz in 1975, Chancellor Schmidt developed a hardline stance on terrorism (see Dahlke 2011). To support this stance, the Federal Police Agency (*Bundeskriminalamt*, BKA) established a special

department for terrorism in 1975, and the German parliament (*Bundestag*) passed a Counterterrorism Bill (*Terrorismusbekämpfungsgesetz*) in 1976.

Crucially, the bill included paragraph 129a, which penalised the creation of and support for terrorist organisations. Paragraph 129a is a core feature of Germany's counterterrorism laws until today and has since adapted alongside the perceived threat landscape. The OPEC siege in December 1975 and Entebbe hijacking in July 1976 furthered the political attention to terrorism. At the same time, Chancellor Schmidt's political power stood on shaky grounds. Opposition leader Helmut Kohl had gained 48% of votes in the 1976 general election, which meant that Chancellor Schmidt's coalition with the FDP rested on a parliamentary majority of only four votes.

In the conjunction of economic and political uncertainties and crises (see Ellwein 1989), many feared for a repetition of history, because the first German Republic – the Weimar Republic – had failed for these reasons (see Metzler 2001; 2002; Moses 2007). Alternative social concepts that began to emerge in academic circles amidst the rapprochement of East and West also challenged unsettled Western identity narrative commitments. These developments provided the backdrop against which the West German terrorism of the 1970s emerged and how it was politically addressed, particularly during the Schleyer kidnapping.

## 4.3. Narrative Formation

For a determinative reading and use of the Schleyer kidnapping as a means to reiterate German identity narratives, Chancellor Schmidt sought to establish narrative authority. He vigorously aimed to control the formation of identity narratives around the state's ontological status, as well as narrative formation and projection more broadly. The control of narrative governance expressed strategic intent.

### 4.3.1. Formalising Narrative Authority: Institutionalising Crisis Management and Narrative Control

Chancellor Schmidt's political approach as a pragmatist and manager was deeply rooted in his individual preferences and political beliefs. Against a cabinet of many 'strong personalities' (Dahlke 2011, p. 48, translated by author), including then Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher, Schmidt was eager to take control and sometimes even undermined the so-called

*Ressortprinzip*.<sup>3</sup> For example, Schmidt decisively influenced international negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR) and the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) – policy areas that fell within the remit of Foreign Minister Genscher (FDP) (Ibid.). As a consequence, Schmidt positioned himself prominently in the international arena: ‘Schmidt gained an almost mythical reputation as a terrorist hunter and crisis manager. The former “ugly German” gained his respect and reputation across the world with resolve and consistency’ (Dahlke 2011, p. 48, translated by author). The reputation of Schmidt as a crisis manager was not accidental. In an attempt to move away from Brandt’s visionary politics, Chancellor Schmidt curated an aura of rational cool-headedness that was to support his narrative of pragmatism and steady leadership (see Haeussler 2017; Birkner 2016). The notion of “cool-headedness” would also play a crucial role in the sensemaking of the Schleyer kidnapping and it was a term Schmidt frequently used, so much so that conservative newspapers criticised that the RAF terrorism and the Schleyer kidnapping specifically were ‘not to be managed by declarations of solidarity and an emphasis on cool-headedness’ (Mann 1977, translated by author; see section 4.4.).

Underlined by his personality and preferred political “style”, these principles also translated into the approach taken during the Schleyer kidnapping. For example, the establishment of the so-called crisis management units effectively limited control and decision-making processes to an exclusive group of political elites outside of parliamentary control. For Wolfgang Kraushaar (2006, p. 1014, translated by author), the creation of the crisis management units meant that Schmidt ‘prioritised the *raison d’état* over the constitutional *raison*’. The creation of the management units also affected how, by whom and where narratives were formed. During the Schleyer kidnapping all traditional public accountability channels – especially the West German parliament – were superseded by the dominance of the directives given by the crisis management units; both over which Chancellor Schmidt resided. The *Kleine Lage* (small crisis management unit) and the *Großer Politische Beratungskreis* (grand crisis management unit) were effectively a ‘cross-party executive that integrated the opposition’ (Kraushaar 2006, p. 1014, translated by author). Initially, the small crisis management unit met twice a day and more frequently during particularly critical phases (see Bundespresse- und Informationsamt 1977, pp. 29-30).

Chancellor Schmidt chaired the small crisis management unit, which included Interior

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<sup>3</sup> The so-called *Ressortprinzip* (Departmental Principle) is a guiding principle of the German political system. It specifies that ministers are in charge of their respective ministries and policies. This principle seeks to ensure that responsibilities are clearly designated between parties and ministries, especially given that ‘almost every government in the Federal Republic’s history [has] been a coalition’ (Green and Paterson 2005, p. 4).

Minister Werner Maihofer, Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Justice Minister Hans-Jochen Vogel, as well as State Minister Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski, and Government Spokesperson Klaus Bölling (Ibid.). It further included BKA President Horst Herold and State Attorney Kurt Rebmann. The grand crisis management unit additionally included former Chancellor, Willy Brandt (SPD); the leader of the opposition, Helmut Kohl (CDU); leader of the CSU, Franz Josef Strauß; Deputy Chairman of the SPD, Herbert Wehner; Wolfgang Mischnik (FDP); Friedrich Zimmermann (CSU) and the four Minister-Presidents of the *Länder* which hosted imprisoned RAF members (Hans Filbinger, Baden-Württemberg; Alfons Goppel, Bavaria; Heinz Kühn, North-Rhine Westphalia; Hans-Ulrich Klose, Hamburg) (Ibid.).

Each of the members of the crisis management units came with their ideologically-rooted ideas of state power. However, the members also attested to how individual experiences and shared histories shaped the political narratives of the time. Most of the crisis management unit members, for example, had experienced WWII. Eager to demonstrate that West Germany learned from its dark past and keen to emphasise West German democratic viability, their shared background guided a considerable part of their action and behaviour (see Scheiper 2010).

These experiences encouraged political actors to represent West Germany's democratic identity as stable and continuous to both society, domestic audiences and the international community. Chancellor Schmidt, for example, wanted to ease concerns by foreign media that Germans were inherently authoritarian (Schmidt 1977, 08/42, p. 3165; see also Terhoeven 2014, pp. 451-455). In his first parliamentary response to the Schleyer kidnapping, Chancellor Schmidt (1977, 08/87, p. 807, translated by author) explicitly addressed this concern:

It might be, as newspapers wrote yesterday, that there is a tendency, to credit the horrendous attacks not only to an extremists' madness, but – as it is said there – a German madness more generally. We will not add fuel to such fires.

Time again, the Chancellor focused on: firstly, fears by others that Germany would resort to its dark past; and secondly, fear as an emotion that was ill-suited to guide politicians and crisis governance. Fear as a dominant emotional undertone to the Schleyer kidnapping spoke to the relevance of ontological insecurity during the events. The urge to express these reassurances pointed to anything but an ontologically secure status of West German state identity at the time of the terrorist attacks. The horrors of WWII were still fresh, and only roughly a generation old. The creation of the Federal Republic had not erased the haunting trauma of WWII; it lingered on, and so did the ontologically insecure status. The Schleyer

kidnapping and the reaction to it, was ‘dramatically exacerbated in their effects by the *doubts, fears, and hidden insecurities*, to which they give free rein’, which propelled the Schleyer kidnapping to be ‘seen as a litmus test for German democracy’ (Hanshew 2012a, p. 4, italics added). From the perspective of ontological security, the ‘doubts, fears, and hidden insecurities’ (Ibid.) as exacerbated by the Schleyer kidnapping spoke to two aspects worth taking note of: (1) they indicated that West Germany’s ontological status was anything but secure and; (2) that the Schleyer kidnapping crucially linked to questioning and stirring these insecurities.

These insecurities were, therefore, the structural conditions upon which political actors could strategically deploy the rhetoric on ontological security. “Never again Weimar” and “never again war” were not merely two affirmations of West Germany’s political objectives. They were narratives informed by the trauma that had been left by the demise of Germany’s first democracy. Weimar served as a reminder of what happened when political systems broke apart by lack of democratic consensus. Indeed, during the Schleyer kidnapping, most political actors alluded to the historical trauma of WWII and even more so, the failure of the Weimar Republic:

As one might expect, the historic collapse of Germany’s Weimar Republic and the failure of its democratic leaders to prevent a National Socialist takeover in 1933 dictated the politicians’ attitudes to extremism in the postwar period. The dominant historical narrative taught West Germans that Weimar’s demise had resulted from its inability to solidify and defend democratic values in the midst of a rising tide of political extremism.

(Rosenfeld 2014, p. 574)

On the one hand, the creation and sustenance of the first decades of the Federal Republic were thus also an exercise in emphasising the strength and viability of West Germany’s democracy. In comparing the RAF violence to that of the Weimar Republic, political actors suggested that democratic fragmentation had led to Weimar’s demise and thus had to be avoided at all costs by strengthening consensus, social cohesion and a robust democratic system.

On the other hand, the comparison between the Schleyer kidnapping and the demise of the Weimar Republic likened the prevention of West German left-wing terrorism to saving West Germany’s very existence. As will be shown, the Schleyer kidnapping was understood to be the young democracy’s ‘litmus test’ (Hanshew 2012a, p. 4), that is, the decisive moment to save West German democracy – above all by the opposition. In this way, a failure to effectively tackle the terrorist threat also meant a failure of this test and, therefore, a failure of West Germany’s democratic viability.

The identity negotiation during the Schleyer kidnapping took place over what it meant to tackle terrorism and what exactly constituted West Germany's democratic viability. Whilst all political actors who were part of the crisis management units had strategic objectives, Chancellor Schmidt attempted to remain dominant in the political control and governance of the Schleyer kidnapping (on the opposition's reasons for ostensibly accepting such a level of control, see section 4.3.3.).

To summarise, in the process of narrative formation, Chancellor Schmidt fostered an institutional framework through which he sought to suspend alternative formats for narrative formation. In doing so, he relied on extraordinary circumstances that were legislatively in place and reserved for national emergencies. Drawing on paragraph 34 of the Basic Law, which codified the legal concept of the justified state of emergency, Chancellor Schmidt effectively invoked a 'supralegal state of emergency', which 'defined the entire period' (Kraushaar 2006, pp. 1021-1022, translated by author). As will be explored, however, despite Schmidt's institutionalisation of narrative control, he was neither able to align his narrative sensemaking with the government's narrative enactment (see section 4.3.5.) nor was he able to prevent the opposition from creating and projecting alternative narratives around the kidnapping (sections 4.3.3. and 4.3.4).

Nevertheless, institutionally, the state of emergency fashioned an image of the Chancellor as in control over the crisis. It was also an attempt to prevent political polarisation by seeking to convince his party members of the importance of centralised crisis control and the opposition that now was not the time for political opportunism. By incorporating members of the opposition in the crisis management units, Chancellor Schmidt also attempted to include all parties in the shared responsibility of state action to avoid that a failure in handling the kidnapping meant his political demise. The strategy of shared responsibility appeared to work during the Schleyer kidnapping: while an uncertain public was unsure about Schleyer's prospects in the course of the kidnapping, an internal paper of the Federal Press Office (in *Der Spiegel* 1977b, translated by author) suggested that this had a 'positive effect' as 'none of the possible outcomes was to disappoint a public horizon of expectation'. The limited purview of agency to save Schleyer's life provided some assurances for Chancellor Schmidt that his fate did not depend on the outcome of the kidnapping, although this only became clearer towards the end of the Schleyer kidnapping.

#### 4.3.2. Chancellor Schmidt's Pursuit of Stability and the Denial of Rupture

As argued, the Schleyer kidnapping was not only used to negotiate the ontological security of

the state strategically, but it also revealed and co-produced underlying ontological insecurity around the viability of West German democracy. Assurance, stability and consensus (the antidote to insecurity because the narratives suggested Weimar had failed for this reason) were thus a core concern for West German policymakers, above all the Chancellor. Of course, Chancellor Schmidt could not free himself of the historical narrative that had informed German political decision-making since 1945. He was further ‘confronted with the fact that many citizens urged the government to the resolute crackdown of terrorists – by way of a social self-mobilisation possibly unique in the history of the Federal Republic’ (Terhoeven 2014, p. 454, translated by author). The situation created tricky waters to navigate; waters Chancellor Schmidt approached by producing a narrative of stability and continuity, whilst narrative enactment suggested the contrary (section 4.3.5.). The focus in this section is on how Chancellor Schmidt tried to narratively foster this stability through narrating the ontological status of Germany as secure. In governing the crisis, Schmidt sought to reiterate the existing state identity narrative of the “militant democracy” and the stability of the West German rule of law.<sup>4</sup>

The question is whether the narrative of strength spoke to the strategic negotiation of the state’s ontological status or if it was merely a means to assure the public that the state was in control? Citizens had to endure multiple violent events before the kidnapping, and the kidnapping was yet another frightening case of terrorist violence. Moreover, Schmidt faced pressures from the public, his party and the opposition, all of which were good reasons to underline the state’s resolve. They were further good reasons to manifest Schmidt’s authority because the Schleyer kidnapping also carried the potential to undermine his credibility as a Chancellor.

Whilst these points are certainly valid, the critical aspect this thesis seeks to sketch out, is *how* Schmidt tied the event to the state’s strength, its identity and how he narrated and substantiated this control. Whatever the reasons for Schmidt’s emphasis on state power, how was neither given nor without pursuing strategic objectives. Which strengths, which identity and which control political actors focus on, is still a choice that they can make. This choice is relevant because it leads to different formulations of identity narratives. It further leads to various policies that seek to enact these narratives.

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<sup>4</sup> Militant democracy is a translation of concept of *wehrhafte Demokratie*, which is a core principle enshrined in Article 18 of the Basic Law seeking to ensure that – unlike the Weimar Republic – German democracy can defend itself against authoritarian and unconstitutional forces. The notion of a militant democracy has led to the establishment of a variety of mechanisms and ‘[allows] for procedures in which the system can defend itself from enemies’ (Langenbacher and Conradt 2017, p. 27), including the establishment of the Federal and *Länder* Offices for the Protection of the Constitution which monitor unconstitutional behaviour.

Chancellor Schmidt attempted to establish the event as progression and underlined the strength of the state and the government's control over the crisis. In his first governmental address to parliament on the events of the kidnapping on September 15, 1977, Schmidt (1977, 08/42, p. 3166, translated by author, italics added) insisted:

The work in our country *continues*. The work in our parliament and of this government *continues*. Yesterday, the Federal government decided on important budgetary matters and employment policy. We have worked on them laboriously. We will *not be forced by terrorists to neglect our tasks*, will *not be forced into political paralysis*. I thus welcome that the Bundestag will begin with the first reading of our tax policies.

To be sure, Chancellor Schmidt acknowledged the disruptive effect of the kidnapping on society. He, therefore, recognised the Schleyer kidnapping as a crisis and a deeply personal and emotional event for the state and its people. For example, in his speech given on the evening of the kidnapping he emphasised that the news of the Schleyer kidnapping had 'deeply affected him' (in Bundespresse- und Informationsamt 1977, p. 19, translated by author). Withal, Schmidt did not seek to erode the ontologically secure status of the state's identity narrative. To the contrary, he emphasised and attempted to demonstrate the stability and continuity of West German state identity. On October 6, 1977, Schmidt (1977, 08/47, pp. 3600-3601, translated by author) declared accordingly that 'no law – in any state – could entirely prevent that criminals murder from ambush' but that it was 'a mistake to think the state is helpless'. He specified that 'the most liberal, most democratic state that Germany has ever known in its history cannot be seriously endangered by a bunch of desperados' (Ibid.). Schmidt (Ibid., p. 3602) also noted that:

The decision [by the Federal Constitutional Court to approve of the contact ban] will strengthen the consensus of our democratic powers and encourage the determination to go to the limits of what the rule of law allows for, but never cross the lines because it would threaten our state identity.

Time and again, Schmidt emphasised that the rule of law was the guiding principle, even if managing the Schleyer kidnapping meant to go to the limits of what the rule of law allowed. In linking the state's ontological security to the demonstration of state agency, Chancellor Schmidt understood the terrorist attack as a challenge for the country, but not as a rupture to the state's logic and not as a threat to state identity. To strengthen the continuity and viability of West German democracy, Chancellor Schmidt thus sought to credibly persuade audiences that the Schleyer kidnapping did not mean democracy's demise:

All our efforts focus on finding a solution that aligns with our moral and legal convictions and our belief in the fundamental values of our liberal society. We will continue on this course ... To threaten steps that go against our constitution is, therefore, of no use. The

members of government and I have sworn in front of the *Bundestag* to safeguard and defend the Basic Law ... I am determined to keep this oath.

(Schmidt 1977, 08/42, p. 3165, translated by author)

If anything, the Schleyer kidnapping, was a test for the constitutional state (*Rechtsstaat*), to prove itself, its viability, and its stability. The questions posed to the constitutional state were, therefore, considered as dangerous as the terrorists themselves. Chancellor Schmidt pursued every possible angle to substantiate the continuity of the “militant democracy”.

Fostering political stability was thus a core concern for Chancellor Schmidt, not least because he soon realised the dangerous implications of an eroded ontological status that mainly the opposition fostered. Schmidt ‘could not rely on the CDU/CSU to respect the political truce that Schmidt had sought through the integration of leading oppositional actors in the ... crisis management units’ (Terhoeven 2014, p. 452, translated by author). Schmidt (Ibid. p. 3166, translated by author), therefore, consistently invoked core notions that linked German democracy’s viability to the stability, continuity and responsibility of state identity:

We will safeguard the internal peace and the political stability of the Federal Republic with all resolve. We need ... self-imposed discipline for this. I know that this is hard. It is hard for me too, but this self-discipline is the expression of our beliefs and our responsibility.

The assurances of the Republic’s internal peace and political stability also relied on discrediting the RAF’s terror as ordinary, non-political acts. It further suggested that the RAF were ordinary criminals – ‘desperados’ (Ibid., p. 3602) – and, therefore, had to be treated accordingly. For example, the Chancellor (Ibid., p. 3166), insisted that the kidnapping in Cologne and its circumstances classified as ‘murder’ and that the RAF kidnapers were ‘murderers’, even if the terrorists claimed that they were committed to a political cause. Through their classification as ‘murderers’ (Ibid.), Schmidt not only aimed to reduce the status of the terrorists to “simple” criminals, but also sought to discredit and counter the terrorists’ self-image as revolutionaries fighting against a Fascist regime (see della Porta 1995, pp. 130-131). While the adoption of the group’s name RAF, spoke to the RAF’s intention ‘to suggest their status as non-governmental forces engaged in “proper” armed conflict’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 570), Schmidt aimed to deprive the RAF of such recognition.

The group’s status and perception by political actors was important because the RAF argued that Germany had learned nothing from WWII and that former Nazis governed the German state (della Porta 1995, pp. 130-131). In doing so, the RAF had directly addressed and targeted West German political actors and economic elites in areas that formed part of the core notions of identity commitments: the democratic state and its economic success.

Reducing the RAF members to the status of murderers further helped to clarify the moral boundaries of acceptable violence. Chancellor Schmidt and the SPD not only narrated the strength of the state monopoly of violence, but by doing so, simultaneously aimed to address the violent branches of student movements more broadly.

By narrating the immorality of violence and rejecting the terrorists' political cause, Chancellor Schmidt further sought to specify the conditions of democratic viability through social cohesion and participatory citizenship. In his first televised reaction to the Schleyer kidnapping, Schmidt (in *Bundespresse- und Informationsamt 1977*, translated by author) emphasised that 'for it is not simply the will of the state that stands against [terrorism] ... but the will of an entire nation'. The 'will of the people' (Ibid.) insinuated that the state did not define the immorality of violence, but its people did, which provided a means for Schmidt to give credibility to state policies. In this way, Schmidt not only narrated the state and the people as one, but he also called for unity, where he recognised the increasing tension and anxiety among society that resulted in calls for a tougher (and non-constitutional) crackdown of terrorists.

For Schmidt, continuity and stability were carried forward by the people, but only if the narrative of stability and democratic viability was able to make ground against anger, anxiety and insecurity. The SPD's self-narrated role as 'a buffer against anti-democratic extremism to both its left and right' (Hanshaw 2012a, p. 213) crucially related to the narration of the purview of state agency as will be argued in the following section.

#### 4.3.3. Schmidt, the SPD and Terrorism as Socio-Political Malaise

As stated, the government and the opposition narrated state agency differently. Where Chancellor Schmidt narrated state agency as the ability to act democratically, Helmut Kohl narrated state agency as the ability to protect the state's authority and to restore order. These two crucially different readings of state agency were supported rhetorically by their connection to narratives that made sense of the root causes of terrorism.

The RAF terrorism and the Schleyer kidnapping specifically brought Social Democrats to consider the causes of terrorism as rooted in 'sociopolitical malaise' (Hanshaw 2012a, p. 126). Even before, the seeming disenfranchisement and lack of identification with the democratic system had played a role and was of concern for the SPD. Chancellor Schmidt (1977, 08/22, p. 1448, translated by author) declared in April 1977 that it was essential to 'make tangible the experiences and raise awareness of the uniqueness of our liberal democratic state in the course of our national history'. However, the theme became more

dominant for the narrative enactment during the Schleyer kidnapping. For Chancellor Schmidt and the SPD, the Schleyer kidnapping constituted a decisive moment at which society had to renew its commitment to the state and at which citizens – especially the younger generation – had to re-identify with West German state identity narratives. In the first address to parliament on the Schleyer kidnapping, Chancellor Schmidt (Ibid., 08/42, p. 3166) stated:

And finally, a thought for the younger. We, the older generation – we who lived through dictatorship and violence, camps and forced displacement, misery and hardship – we know what war is. It is for this reason we have worked for peace. It is for this reason that we are working for internal and external peace today.

For the Chancellor, the West German identity did not have to be redescribed or restored. The identity narrative was not inherently flawed, which explains in part, why he emphasised its continuity and stability. Instead, he argued that the problem was the lack of identification with this narrative by younger generations. For this reason, Chancellor Schmidt saw it necessary to reiterate West German identity narratives. After the Schleyer kidnapping, he declared, for example, that:

many young people ... ask questions about the purpose of life. Everyone has to find their answers, but they can only be in the orientation to basic values. Because we cannot live as individuals but only in a community; a society where people rely on each other. The answer can only be in the awareness of this community that lies at the heart of our state.

(Ibid., 08/50, p. 3756)

The identification with the state, which in the eyes of Schmidt represented a community, thus served to answer questions concerning orientation and purpose. In Schmidt's response, the state "anchored" the individual's questions and uncertainties around purpose and meaning. In this way, Schmidt sought to 'discursive[ly] anchor' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) the absence of meaning in terrorism and the provision of meaning through state identity narratives.

Likening the Schleyer kidnapping to a peak of a generational conflict, also meant that in resolving the kidnapping, Schmidt sought to propose that the generational conflict could be resolved. According to Lutz Hachmeister (2004, p. 400, translated by author), 'the generational conflict ... between the adults of the NS-regime and their descendants was carried to the grave together with Schleyer'. To be sure, Hachmeister's assessment might lack nuance, as the generational conflict was far from over after the Schleyer kidnapping and "lived on" in a variety of different ways, for example with the Green Party entering parliament in 1982. However, it is noteworthy that the close link between the 'socio-political malaise' (Hanshew 2012a, p. 126) and terrorism around the Schleyer kidnapping encouraged

Schmidt to “write” the end of the conflict alongside the “declaration of victory” on October 20, 1977.

For Chancellor Schmidt and the SPD, the end of the generational conflict was thus inherent to the formation of a cohesive society. The solution to the generational conflict rested on the younger generation’s identification with West German identity narratives, which in his sensemaking meant education about the benefits of West German democracy. It followed that Chancellor Schmidt wanted to forge an environment around the Schleyer kidnapping, which facilitated the affective identification with West German identity narratives and to create the conditions for participatory citizenship. In addressing the Schleyer kidnapping, Chancellor Schmidt (1977, 08/42, p. 3166, translated by author) declared accordingly:

Let us all tell the young people: Internalise too, the democratic society in our community, take it on, to contribute to it, to take part in the creation of the future life of your generation – shape and design [the parameters of this society] with conviction – not with violence.

In calling upon the younger generation, Chancellor Schmidt perceived state agency as tasked with encouraging participatory interpretation of the existing identity narratives. In seeking to address the fear that ‘the material affluence and political conformity of the Adenauer years, as well as younger Germans’ lack of historical identity, had left much of the youth political stunted and with little, if any, sense of connection to the FRG’ (Hanshew 2012a, p. 126), many of the senior SPD members and Chancellor Schmidt called for a ‘political-spiritual confrontation’ (see Schmidt 1975, 07/155, p. 10736; 1977, 08/34, p. 3603, translated by author) with terrorism. As a result, the SPD instigated a series of investigations into the politico-social dynamic of terrorism and concluded that educational policies were a means to encourage younger generations to shape West German democracy.

The political attention to and government policies on civil society education stood in a direct link to ‘the SPD’s argument that active democrats were ultimately (militant) democracy’s best bet’ (Hanshew 2012a, p. 127). This policy focus resulted in the creation and funding for institutions like the *Bundeszentrale for Politische Bildung, BZP* (Centre for Political Education), which still exists today. The Federal government under Chancellor Schmidt also widely published a special issue of the magazine *PZ* (in Büchse 2007, p. 320, translated by author) titled ‘Democracy knows how to defend itself. The civil war is not happening’. The government distributed the publication in schools across the country. In reaction to the Schleyer kidnapping, the Federal Interior Ministry (Bundesinnenministerium 1981, translated by author) also held a conference on ‘Public Relations and Terrorism’, from which a publication on ‘Tackling Terrorism – Avenues for Political Education’ resulted.

These policies were guided by the assumption that once people understood and bought into the identity narrative of the “militant democracy”, they had no choice but to defend the principles of this democratic system because the evidence of democracy’s viability would speak for itself. The SPD thus sought to create a democratic public who identified with the political system and ultimately took on the West German state identity as part of their own to carry it forward.

The particular reading of social cohesion was central to the formulation of victory over the terrorists in the aftermath of the kidnapping. In his governmental address on October 20, 1977 – two days after Schleyer’s death, the successful release of the Landshut hostages and the collective suicide in Stammheim – Chancellor Schmidt (1977, 08/50, p. 3760, translated by author) declared in parliament: ‘I can feel that the people in the Federal Republic have moved closer together ... The civilised world has regarded the dignity and resolve of our people ... highly and compassionately’. Robin Wagner-Pacifici (2017, p. 24) has considered ‘the declaration of victory ... an attempt of formation, of sedimentation of fleeting events’. Chancellor Schmidt’s declaration of unity functioned in a similar vein. It produced “evidence” for the narrative that Chancellor Schmidt had eagerly fostered during the kidnapping, namely that of social cohesion and participatory citizenship.

#### 4.3.4. The “Zero Hour”: Helmut Kohl and the Ontological Erosion of the State

Following from Schmidt’s attempt to establish narrative control, the question is why the opposition ostensibly agreed to Schmidt’s attempt to control narratives and govern the kidnapping? Further, how did Helmut Kohl and the opposition narrate the Schleyer kidnapping and to which end? How did Helmut Kohl and the opposition’s sensemaking interact with Chancellor Schmidt’s narratives on democratic viability, the “militant democracy” and the strong state?

Firstly, Helmut Kohl’s sensemaking of the event was informed by his relationship to Schleyer, his biography and political beliefs. Helmut Kohl was a friend of Schleyer, and the kidnapping personally affected him (see Dörries 2009). In a letter to Schleyer’s widow after Schleyer’s funeral on October 25, 1977, Helmut Kohl (in Ameri-Siemens 2017, pp. 40-41, translated by author) wrote:

In the horrendous weeks since September 5, I always saw the image of your husband and the questioning faces of all of you in front of my eyes. In many conversations, on many days and nights, I lived through a terrible conflict between friendship and bitter duty. Now I can only pray and ask for your and your children’s forgiveness.

In his memoirs, Kohl (2004, translated by author) also remembered that:

Rationally I was convinced that my position and the position of the crisis management units was right ... But did we have the right to sacrifice a human life in the name of the *raison d'état*? It was an incredible conflict. The days and hours of the Schleyer kidnapping are among the worst experiences of my life.

As Schmidt (2013) recalled, Helmut Kohl even offered to be exchanged with Hanns Martin Schleyer; an idea that Chancellor Schmidt outright rejected. Much of Kohl's friendship with Schleyer and his political stance was deeply rooted in his political career, which he began shortly after the end of WWII. His guiding political concepts were that of Christianity, the Western World and a future peaceful Europe of states with Germany at its centre (Scheiper 2010, pp. 88-91). Kohl was deeply influenced by former Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's dedication to Germany's integration into the political "West" (*Westintegration*) rooted in the transatlantic partnership, a market-based liberal democracy and an Anti-Communist world view.<sup>5</sup> Helmut Kohl advanced his career as Minister-President of Rhineland-Palatinate from 1969 to 1976 with fervent determination, to face Helmut Schmidt in the Federal election of 1976 as the Chancellor candidate for the CDU/CSU fractions. For Kohl running against Schmidt was a 'serious misfortune', as 'Schmidt commanded abilities that Kohl lacked' (Schwarz 2012, p. 420, translated by author).

Accepting his defeat, Helmut Kohl sought to challenge Chancellor Schmidt by establishing the strength of the opposition and unity amongst the CDU and CSU parties (see *Ibid.*, p. 409). During the Schleyer kidnapping – despite Chancellor Schmidt's attempt to take control over narratives – Kohl faced fewer pressures to foster democratic consensus than the Chancellor did and thus could narrate from a broader narrative scope. In this way, RAF terrorism and the Schleyer kidnapping, in particular, posed an opportunity to demonstrate that Chancellor Schmidt's leadership was inadequate.

As a consequence, Kohl challenged Chancellor Schmidt in those areas in which the public perceived him as most credible, i.e. his role as a crisis manager. Helmut Kohl began early to criticise the Chancellor's counterterrorist measures publicly and underlined the ineffective lack of action on part of the government. For example, Kohl initiated his political sensemaking of the Schleyer kidnapping by speaking on national television half an hour before Chancellor Schmidt. Demanding stricter and more aggressive action against the terrorists, Kohl (in *Bundespresse- und Informationsamt 1977*, p. 19, translated by author) stated that the Schleyer kidnapping was 'once again proof' that a 'gang of blind-raging

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<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of the relevance of the Adenauerpolitik and Westintegration as central elements of post-war German politics, see Padgett ed. 1994; Paterson 2012; Pulzer 1995; Schwarz 1991.

murderers' was 'running around our country' and that they had 'declared war on our people and civilisation and what we call and live as a liberal democracy'. Kohl's narration of the kidnapping as an act of war, soon began to spiral when media reciprocated the reading and increasingly deployed rhetoric that reflected on the Schleyer kidnapping as an act of war (Musolff 1996; see section 4.4.). Golo Mann (1977, translated by author) wrote in the newspaper *Die Welt* that West Germany found itself in a 'new kind of civil war' and that:

We are indeed experiencing a gruesome and new form of civil war. It does not matter whether the attackers are 120 or 1200 ... even 120 murderers, capable of anything ... supported by international terrorism with billions in assets, are strong enough to break this state if we continue as we have ... We are at war; we are confronted by enemies who are ready to kill. Furthermore, in this war, the Federal Republic is as innocent as an angel.

The uptake of the terrorists' 'declaration of war' (Kohl in Bundespresse- und Informationsamt 1977, p. 19, translated by author) soon proved to be a powerful means to carry the opposition's narrative. In a way, the opposition's uptake of the terrorists' 'declaration of war' (Ibid.), facilitated '[t]he "propaganda success" of the RAF' as 'it offered a militaristic model of interpretation for the conflict with the state' (Musolff 1996, p. 161, translated by author). It further helped to establish rigorous narratives around friend and foe, crucially linked to an urgent call for action as advocated by Kohl and the CDU/CSU more broadly. In this reading, the 'blind-raging' (Kohl in Bundespresse- und Informationsamt 1977, p. 19, translated by author) murderers and their sympathisers were the foes to the state and its liberality, and no more ambiguities were deemed possible in this reading. He further urged the government to finally realise that it was 'five minutes to midnight' and that the state had to 'deploy all means' to 'end the unbearable threat to our internal peace' (Ibid.).

Kohl's emphasis on urgent action was part of a broader strategy to undermine the government. For example, Helmut Kohl and the conservative party sought to tie Chancellor Schmidt and leading SPD members to the terrorist spectrum. A report by the CDU/CSU party (CDU-Bundesgeschäftsstelle 1977), published shortly after the kidnapping, for example, insisted that the academic left and leading SPD politicians were amongst the sympathisers that had made terrorism possible in the first place. The only proof the CDU/CSU report offered were decontextualized quotes implicating, among others, leading SPD politicians such as Willy Brandt. The report further argued that insisting on cool-headedness, as suggested by Chancellor Schmidt's rational approach, was not only wrong in light of the severity of the kidnapping but helped to foster an aura of lawlessness and thus directly contributed to terrorism. Even conservative media sources considered the report a step too far (Hertz-

Eichenrode 1977a). However, the report spoke to the ferocity with which the CDU/CSU sought to undermine the SPD from multiple angles.

Similarly, when the government passed the controversial *Kontaktsperregesetz* (contact ban; see section 4.3.5.), and some SPD parliamentarians held reservation against the bill's passing, the CDU/CSU opposition took these hesitations as evidence that sympathies for the terrorists had subverted the SPD party. These arguments further contributed to the conservative's understanding that Schmidt had not been able to tackle terrorism effectively because the SPD itself was sabotaged by the political left and thus suggested the party's secret sympathy with the terrorist cause. Kohl (1977, 08/47, p. 3609, translated by author) argued that Schmidt 'lacked courage' because he had 'become open to blackmail by the majority of Leftists in his party'. Further that 'the true matters of destiny and vital questions remained ill-addressed by this government' because even if Schmidt had the will, the 'radical Left in his party and some fellow travellers in the FDP prevented' the Chancellor 'to do the reasonable thing' (Ibid.). In other words, the Schleyer kidnapping represented a welcome opportunity for the opposition to challenge the Chancellor's authority and legitimacy and to place CDU/CSU-specific interests in the contestational space of the Schleyer kidnapping.

In conjunction with undermining the government's legitimacy, Helmut Kohl and the CDU/CSU additionally attempted to strategically place the CDU/CSU as the better alternative to the government. To be sure, it was clear to the opposition that it had to be ostensibly supportive in the crisis management units. CDU/CSU member Bernhard Vogel (in Terhoeven 2014, p. 453, translated by author), for example, argued that it was 'no question that we currently have to be cooperative in the crisis management units'. However, it was also clear to Helmut Kohl and the opposition that the participation in and cooperation with the government did not come without strings attached.

Instead, the Schleyer kidnapping constituted a moment that could be strategically used to advocate for proposed CDU/CSU policies, establish electoral success in the future and ultimately advocate a rewriting of identity narratives. Helmut Kohl narrated the state as being at the brink of collapse and the Schleyer kidnapping as the state's most fundamental crisis. He further suggested that the Schleyer kidnapping was the ultimate test for the West German state. CSU member Günther Müller (in Büchse 2007, p. 316, translated by author) went even so far as to attest that the state during the Schleyer crisis was fighting 'its last battle'. The Schleyer kidnapping was therefore constructed as *the* moment at which the state had to win over terrorism or be doomed to fail. For Kohl (Ibid.), the RAF posed an 'unbearable threat' to

West Germany's 'internal peace', which in the narration of Helmut Kohl meant law and order rooted in traditional values. The country had to fight this threat.

In doing so, Helmut Kohl attempted to strategically erode the ontological status of West German state identity, to push for more stringent and invasive counterterrorism measures. He also sought to undermine the ontological security of the state to link anxiety and the lack of order. In this way, he also presented himself and the opposition parties as being able to solve the lack of order and orientation. The Schleyer kidnapping thus posed a moment at which basic parameters of the guiding state identity could be questioned and conservative political actors sought to lead the discussion.

The opposition conjured an image of West Germany at the brink of global civil war; a civil war in which Germany could not afford to be complicit. The leader of the CSU, Franz Josef Strauß – always a bit more extreme in his vocal narration of the Schleyer kidnapping than Helmut Kohl – spoke to this point two weeks after the kidnapping on September 19, 1977. He declared that if West Germany did not contain terrorism, it was close to being responsible for causing a 'global civil war' (Strauß in Terhoeven 2014, p. 454, translated by author). Franz Josef Strauß (Ibid.) found that causing such a global civil war would be comparable to 'Germany's guilt in the two world wars'. He clarified that 'people have committed as many criminal acts with ink ... and as many attacks from teacher's desks as later from the streets' (Ibid.). Two years before, Strauß (1975, 07/155, p. 10822, translated by author) had already argued that the government's 'idea of democratising society will lead to the end of ... democracy and the gradual extinction of individual freedoms by functional controls and collective organisations'. It followed that the inclusion of citizens and appeals to the state's ontological insecurity played a crucial strategic role.

The question is whether it was merely strategic timing for the opposition to question the authority of a governing Chancellor? Further, where Chancellor Schmidt narrated the solidarity among democrats, the CDU/CSU headed by Helmut Kohl had crucially different goals and policy interests to pursue. In this way, the Schleyer kidnapping could have simply been read as an opportune moment to push for the realisation of interests and to undermine Chancellor Schmidt's authority. To be sure, Helmut Kohl sought to undermine Chancellor Schmidt at a moment that appeared opportune. He further strategically advocated for policies that the SPD-led governing coalition had previously rejected. Nevertheless, how Kohl and the opposition parties narrated the moment in conjunction with state identity and rupture to the ontological status pointed to more than opportune strategic and political play.

More than Chancellor Schmidt, Helmut Kohl and the CDU/CSU fractions invoked moral claims that tied to values and order. In particular, the sense of urgency that Helmut Kohl attached to the immediate sensemaking of the event addressed the ontological security of the citizens directly. For example, Helmut Kohl (1977, 08/42, p. 3167, translated by author) suggested:

Citizens are asking themselves how much longer they have to live with terror. For this reason, our fellow citizens want to know what the government ... is doing to stop the terrorists once and for all. The citizens have heard enough speeches; now, they want actions. Let us not pretend: There is growing unrest about the continuous uncertainty.

Whereas Chancellor Schmidt perceived state agency as the ability to act, Helmut Kohl narrated state agency as the ability to restore order. In understanding the strategic implications of the anxiety felt among the public, Helmut Kohl, for example, perceived the erosion of the state's ontological security as crucial to placing a restoration of identity narratives for Germany's future. In an extraordinary CDU/CSU faction meeting on September 7, 1977 – two days after the kidnapping – Helmut Kohl (in Terhoeven 2014, p. 453, translated by author) told his faction members:

It must not happen – and I am saying this rather bluntly – that from the current circumstances and also how we behave psychologically [during] ... the kidnapping that the other side uses this moment to establish itself as the strong and powerful government ... We need to make very concentrated efforts so that we are able in the near future to lead the public discussion ... [The] available ... data makes clear that the extent of the threat went under the skin of our citizens.

According to Helmut Kohl (Ibid.), the opposition now had to 'offensively', 'go to the streets so the citizens would see which decision they now should make'. He further suggested to the CDU/CSU faction members that 'the available demographic data proves that 84% of the population thought it likely that a terrorist attack was to happen and that – in line with our argument – a majority of the populace is willing to follow us' (Ibid.). Further, over half of the population were said to believe that the state 'contributed to the current developments by its weak approach' and that 'as terrible as it may sound, we have to decide now and today on the big debate on questions of internal security in the Federal Republic' (Ibid.).

Helmut Kohl was thus well aware of the public mood as a crucial strategic tool in seeking to position the CDU/CSU as both the guarantor for order and the right political choice in the future. One of the central themes of Helmut Kohl's narrative was, therefore, that of restoring order, which he juxtaposed to the weakness of Chancellor Schmidt's and ultimately the SPD's social-liberal politics.

Helmut Kohl and the conservative opposition thus presented the Schleyer kidnapping as the moment at which the state's demise was well possible if the state did not avert it. For the state to avert its demise, Kohl sought to restore what he considered lost (see section 4.3.4.). This restoration process focused in particular on traditional values and had at heart a law and order approach that was at the core of the conservative's guiding policies. His scathing criticism of the government went beyond mere strategic opportunism. He constructed the Schleyer kidnapping as the moment at which the social-liberal project – its reforms, its educational liberalism and pluralism – had resulted in the state's most fundamental crisis.

For Helmut Kohl, the Schleyer kidnapping was of decisive importance for laying the groundwork of West Germany's political future, especially around the concept of internal security. He linked the provision of this groundwork to the 'intersubjectively held feeling of threat in the German public' which 'had produced a societal consensus, hitherto unprecedented in the Federal Republic' (Balz 2007, p. 310, translated by author). Andreas Musolff (1996) understood this feeling in terms of a moral panic. The forceful attempts of Helmut Kohl and the conservatives to erode the ontological status of the state strategically can in part explain this intersubjectively held feeling of threat and anxiety, not least where they were able to project these narratives into the media landscape (see section 4.4.1.).

So all-encompassing was Kohl and the opposition's understanding of the Schleyer kidnapping as the final test for the state that they did not even rule out introducing the death penalty. Although initially against it, Helmut Kohl at least considered introducing the threat of the death penalty without seriously planning its realisation (see Bergstermann 2016, p. 292). CSU chairman Franz Josef Strauß (*Der Spiegel* 1980) went further in suggesting that the crisis management unit had two options: either to release one imprisoned terrorist after another and then to hunt and shoot them, or to shoot a terrorist every hour until the kidnapping was over. Chancellor Schmidt and Minister of Justice Hans Jochen Vogel promptly and firmly rejected these ideas. While Schmidt tried to counter the opposition's reading of crisis, some indicators spoke to the fact that the opposition was more successful than Chancellor Schmidt would have liked. An opinion poll published in the newspaper *Welt am Sonntag* (in Probst 2010a) on September 11, 1977, indicated that 67% of respondents were in favour of introducing the death penalty for terrorists and 60% supported a strategy of non-negotiation.

The strategic erosion of the state's ontological status, therefore, linked to the suggested restoration of identity narratives. Conservatives were inclined to pinpoint the source of RAF terror and the Schleyer crisis in the loss of 'traditional authority associated with the 1960s'

(Hanshew 2012a, p. 126) and to not only fight against terrorism, but the seeming social order more generally, ‘which they diffusely identified as social-democratic’ (Büchse 2007, p. 316, translated by author). The Schleyer kidnapping as the peak of terrorism was the state’s problem because conservatives narrated state agency as the protection of law and order. The SPD/FDP coalition had championed, so Kohl’s scathing criticism, protests and conflict as essential virtues because the government had seen in them a means to overcome supposedly deadlocked structures. In doing so, as went Kohl’s narrative, they had produced the very same terrorism that now was on the verge of causing democracy’s destruction.

#### 4.3.5. Kohl, the CDU/CSU and Terrorism as Moral Degeneration and the Weak State

It follows that opposition leader Helmut Kohl and the CDU/CSU placed the root causes of terrorism and the character of state agency elsewhere. The conservatives established correlations between upholding traditional values and the likelihood for participation in criminal organisations. For example, a report by the conservative’s Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (in Hanshew 2012a, p. 126) suggested that there was a ‘direct correlation between the importance of family and religion in a citizen’s life and the likelihood of illegal political participation’. In this sensemaking, it was the state’s responsibility to protect both traditional values and those institutions that prevented “moral deviance”. Around the events of the Schleyer kidnapping, Helmut Kohl increasingly forged the narrative that terrorism was the result of straying away from traditional identity narratives and values that he and the conservatives considered to guide West German public and political life.

Eighteen days after the Schleyer kidnapping, Helmut Kohl (in Melder 1977, translated by author) argued in an interview with the newspaper *Frankfurter Rundschau* that: ‘[The Social Democrats] have used their government powers to push their twisted ideological understanding of freedom into practical policies; ideologies not directed at the individual but the collective’. Attesting a ‘cultural hegemony’ (Ibid.) of social-democratic thought, the CDU/CSU was, therefore, keen to reverse the SPD’s socio-cultural policies and to re-establish the strong state. According to this narrative, the conservatives wanted to reverse the ‘suicidal liberalisation’ (Roegele 1977, translated by author), and instead set out to re-initiate the traditional relationship between citizen and state. It also meant to ‘resist the misbelief that citizens had only rights, but no duties’, as Minister-President of Baden-Württemberg, Hans Filbinger (1977, p. 3, translated by author) argued.

On the occasion of the memorial service for the policemen who had died during Schleyer's kidnapping, the CDU/CSU wanted to emphasise that society had to 'renounce the falsehood that law and order were outdated and obsolete values' (Ibid.). Further, society had to stop believing that 'those who looked for and fuelled conflict ... would be better citizens than those who took their service and duties' (Ibid.) seriously. Kohl (in Melder 1977, p.2 translated by author) similarly argued that liberal and left intellectuals – who were understood to have contributed, if not instigated the erosion of traditional values – 'were also citizens of the state'. He further clarified: 'Now citizens have to rally around the state, to protect it fiercely. As is the case for all of us, intellectuals cannot only make use of their rights as citizens but also have to take on the duties as citizens' (Ibid.).

The conservative persuasion, prominently advocated by Helmut Kohl, thus implied the restoration of identity narratives, forged the restoration of law and order and the relationship between citizens and the state. The narratives forged around the events of the Schleyer kidnapping were carried further than the immediate events. After his successful election in 1982, Helmut Kohl (in Clough 1998, p. 88, translated by author) declared that the reason for West Germany's dire situation, rested on the SPD's policies that had 'instigat[ed] insecurity in the relationship to our past, about our basic ethical values and social virtues of state and law, and ultimately, ... produc[ed] insecurity in our national self-image'. Many values, as was Kohl's (Ibid.) claim, had 'landed in the dustbin of history' including religion, authority, family and respect for the elderly. The opposition thus sought to create a climate which shaped notions of what it meant to be a good citizen according to conservative ideals, which also meant a return of the 'guiding idea of loyal citizens' (Büchse 2007, p. 318, translated by author). In this reading of state agency and citizens' duty, the 'juxtaposition of anarchy and order ... increased the meaning of order' (Sack 1984, p. 80, translated by author) as the only natural and possible order. This attempt translated into a variety of proposed bills and amendments to the existing Criminal Code. For example, in a draft bill amendment to the *Kontaktsperregesetz*, the CDU/CSU (Deutscher Bundestag 1977, p. 8, translated by author), suggested further investigation and prosecution of the sympathiser "scene":

The fight of terrorist, violent crime has not led to success ... None of the terrorist, violent crimes have been fully solved, even in cases where we know the names of the criminals. The sympathizer scene protects them ... Sympathizers play a crucial role in the development of terrorism before the violent act. We cannot see the spectacular attacks ... in isolation. They stem from a general disregard for the state, its institutions and laws.

Identity narrative restoration and the restoration of order became hierarchically superior to the anarchy of moral deviance associated with the terrorists and their sympathisers. It followed

that ‘endurance and order ... became crucially meaningful: the “value of order” of the existing order lay in its continuity’ (Sack 1984, p. 80, translated by author). As Fritz Morstein-Marx (1963, p. 90, translated by author) clarifies: ‘An aura of a superior order surrounded the status quo’. This aura was made possible by those narratives that envisioned restoration as meaningful and transformation as harmful. The content of change, however, was itself a structure imbued with narrativity. A pluralistic claim or a critical stance towards the state was perceived as movement and transformation. It undermined the transformative ability of moral deviance. By narrating the superior order of restoration, anything that was not an action in the pursuit of such restoration was considered harmful. This restoration targeted, in particular, the political left, but also included members of the civil society, academia, the news media as well as Schmidt and his government.

Through legislative action and accusations directed at Chancellor Schmidt, Helmut Kohl insinuated that the government was failing its people. Time and again, Kohl thus assumed a role in which he spoke for the people and incorporated the reading of the people into restoring state design and identity narratives. Directed at Chancellor Schmidt, Kohl (1977, 08/47, p. 3616, translated by author) argued:

For years, you have tolerated that the traditional role of the state – that is to safeguard law and order and thus the happiness of the citizens – has only been modestly and occasionally highlighted as the state’s central function. However, ... failing to understand law and order as the state’s core task, failing to outspokenly say that only a truly strong state with authority – not an authoritarian state but a state with authority – can safeguard the freedom of its citizen, also dismantles the identification of citizens with law and order, and also unsurprisingly leads to the deterioration of civil duty.

The CDU/CSU under Kohl thus aimed to establish a value narrative of society that made moral deviance from this order a criminal activity. In juxtaposing order (restoration) against terrorist sympathisers, for example, the CDU/CSU turned moral deviance into a legal category. Proposing legal amendments that included tighter regulation of sympathisers, was, therefore, an attempt to “encode” the opposition’s reading of order and moral deviance into law. Language – and policing it – were central elements in this process: ‘At this point, it was not only criticism toward state and society that were taken as evidence for terrorist sympathisers, but language itself became a measurement for loyalty’ (Spiller 2006, p. 1249, translated by author). Bernhard Vogel (1977, pp. 1, 12, translated by author) of the CDU, for example, stated:

A sympathiser can already be a person who says Baader-Meinhof group instead of gang ... Our state is not helpless. Where sympathisers directly violate existing law, we can intervene, but also whoever contradicts the spirit of our constitution can incriminate themselves.

Language became a seismographic tool for anti-state propaganda and policing it a means to shape the discursive parameters of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. The pursuit of controlling language tied closely to the establishment of value narratives or rather their proposed restoration. An ideologically pluralistic society, a society that was too soft on crime, would end up as nothing but the shambles of its fruitless attempts. So intense was the pressure on intellectuals and academia that a range of professors saw themselves forced to declaring loyalty to the state (see Büchse 2007, p. 309). The ‘potential for stigmatisation and its blurriness’ writes Stefan Spiller (2006, p. 1248, translated by author) ‘predestined the [sympathiser] term in this situation in particular for internal mobilisation, in which it seemed to ensure heightened conformity of public opinion’. In this process, state resolve linked to the commitment and loyalty to the state.

The ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around terrorist violence thus also sought to settle state loyalty as the absence of support for the terrorist cause. As part of the “hunt for sympathizers” – a discursive element of West German terrorism that was fashioned by both the government and the opposition as well as the media – Helmut Kohl attempted to ‘[place] ideological categories alongside moral patterns within the story of terrorism’ (Hanshew 2012a, p. 193). These moral patterns became a binary pattern of friend and foe during the Schleyer kidnapping and did not allow for differentiation. In the conservative reading, a lack of sympathy for or loyalty to the state, meant support for terrorism.

While the CDU/CSU opposition seemed to substantiate its strategy through continuous drumbeats that sought to erode the state’s ontological security, Schmidt and the government attempted to stabilise narratives by enacting narratives of state strength through policies. In seeking to substantiate these narratives, Chancellor Schmidt aimed to secure and demonstrate the strength of the state and its ability to govern through the crisis. Narrative enactment was further a means to react to pressures from the opposition and the public. A sense of growing anxiety and anger did not go unnoticed by Schmidt. In a phone call with French President d’Estaing, Chancellor Schmidt (in Terhoeven 2015, pp. 88-89, translated by author) had lamented the ‘horrendous state’ of public opinion in his country and that he ‘was pressured by the opposition, his party and broader circles of non-partisan citizens.’

Chancellor Schmidt’s fears that the public mood was turning were not entirely unfounded. Archival research by Sabine Bergstermann (2016, p. 291, translated by author), also uncovered that a large number of letters reached Federal and *Länder* ministries in the Autumn of 1977 and that they mirrored an aggressive and furious mood. Schmidt thus sought

to find a way to react to these pressures while maintaining control over the narrative of strength, cohesion and continuity. Yet, how political actors sought to enact narratives did not produce the sense of necessary alignment and instead resulted in ‘the governing parties ... undermining their ... narrative with actions that appeared to contradict their declaratory policy of adherence to democratic values and the rule of law’ (de Graaf 2010, p. 14). The lack of narrative alignment, in turn, supported the conservative’s narrative sensemaking. During the 44 days of the Schleyer kidnapping, the government had not only established an unmatched news ban (see section 4.4.2.) and extraordinary crisis management units (see section 4.3.), but it went further in legislating the so-called *Kontaktsperregesetz* (contact ban) in an unparalleled speed. Passed on September 29, 1977, it came into effect on October 2, 1977, although it had been in use before, on the basis of shaky legal grounds (see Deutscher Bundestag 2017). The law empowered the Justice Minister and *Länder* Ministers to ban any contact and verbal or written communication between jailed RAF members and the outside world, including defence attorneys and close relatives. The law constituted the most severe infringement on fundamental rights of prisoners, at the same time at which it constituted the peak of an already extensive catalogue of counterterrorist measures taken to repel the terrorist threat.

Most of these legislative reactions, including stricter rules of imprisonment and the possibility to continue with the trial even if the accused were absent, targeted the rights of the jailed RAF members and curtailed them to a critical degree. In addition, prison wards attached the cell doors with foam rubber panels at night and played music on prison floors during the day, to ensure that the prisoners were cut off from any contact even between each other (Aust 1998, p. 536). Notwithstanding the depth of infringements and surveillance, the collective suicide on October 18, 1977, also showed that the prisoners still found ways to communicate – how is to date not entirely clear. Justice Minister Hans-Jochen Vogel (in Bundespresse- und Informationsamt 1977, p. 11, translated by author) justified the contact ban by arguing it was a matter of life and death: ‘To counter the current danger to the life of Hanns Martin Schleyer it is imperative to interrupt ... any connection among the prisoners ... or with the outside world’. Speaking for the CDU/CSU in parliament, Klaus Hartmann (1977, 08/44, p. 3367, translated by author), argued:

The problem of our young democratic state is that we have not yet aligned liberalism on the one hand and defensive mechanisms of the rule of law on the other, and this at the expense of state power. The enemies of our order use the insecurity in our state’s self-image. Our state can only safeguard the liberty of law-abiding citizens if it goes against the enemies with all necessary resolve. Perseverance and self-defence do not mean that we are returning to a police state.

The SPD presented the contact ban as a sign of the ‘determination to safeguard the internal peace and political stability in our country’ (Weber, 1977, 08/44, p. 3368, translated by author). Further, the SPD (Ibid.) argued that the contact ban ‘only infringed upon the rights of a few, if that meant to guarantee the freedom and freedom from physical harm of the many’.

The Schmidt government and some *Länder* Minister-Presidents thus presented the extraordinary measures as essential to protecting Schleyer’s life. In part, the justification mirrored one of the core objectives the crisis management units had set, namely to ‘free Schleyer alive’ (Bundespresse- und Informationsamt 1977, p. 18, translated by author). However, as Helmut Schmidt (2013, translated by author) later conceded ‘from the moment of the hijacking of the aeroplane Landshut, the 87 people on board were more important’ than Schleyer’s life. Not all SPD members were supportive of the contact ban and Manfred Coppik (1977, 08/44, p. 3372), one of SPD members to vote against the contact ban, argued:

With their guns, the RAF creates an atmosphere in our country, in which reactionaries seek to destroy the democratic achievements we have fought for so tirelessly. It is one of the reasons why I am against violence and terror. The other reason ... is so that the terrorists are not successful in undermining the democratic principles of our state, which is also why I am against the bill.

The CDU/CSU opposition attacked the SPD members who voted against the contact ban harshly. They loudly intervened when Coppik gave his speech in parliament. Uta Demes (1994, p. 97, translated by author) dubbed the expansive scope of the contact ban and the extent to which it infringed on prisoner’s rights as ‘counter-hostage-taking’ by the state. Less polemically, the contact ban was at best an ineffective and disproportionate tool to safeguard Schleyer’s life or for finding the kidnappers.

In this way, the narrative enactment also enabled long-held SPD policies on internal security that – while not exclusively tied to the Schleyer kidnapping – sought to give legitimacy to more general changes to the concept of internal security. The ‘modernization and quantitative expansion of the police ... was a key part of the Social Democratic reform program of the 1970s’ (Katzenstein 1993, p. 272). For example, the chief of the Federal Criminal Agency, Horst Herold, had long worked to modernise West German police forces. Despite Herold’s modernisation efforts, the Federal security architecture still posed considerable hurdles both politically and technologically. Politically, the authority and governance over police forces was a central power of the respective *Länder* governments. Accepting centralisation thus meant a decrease in power for *Länder* governments. Technologically, Herold faced problems because, by the time Herold wanted to transform

police work, *Länder* police agencies had already established heterogeneous databases and systems (see Hanshew 2012a, p. 120).

For Horst Herold, the terrorist threat and the escalation of the Schleyer kidnapping thus posed a particularly opportune moment to realise police modernisation. The RAF terrorism appeared to demonstrate that only a centrally led police force could counter threats to national security. In this way, Chancellor Schmidt was able to warp a long-term SPD political objective to shift away from ‘decentralised hyperfederalism’ (Ibid.) around the events of the German Autumn.

Immediately after the Schleyer kidnapping on September 5, 1977, the government and government agencies further launched the then most comprehensive and extensive search for the criminals and Schleyer in the history of the Federal Republic (Peters 1991). Police forces in the thousand began searching for Schleyer, despite demands by the kidnappers to stop the public search. Across the Federal Republic, police forces erected roadblocks and implemented countless traffic controls. The political capital Bonn and the *Bundestag* were fenced off by barbed wire, which caused the magazine *Quick* (in Probst 2010b, translated by author) to describe Bonn as a ‘city in fear’. The weekly newspaper *DIE ZEIT* (Ibid., translated by author) argued that it was necessary to protect politicians but that the barbed wire fencing of parliament also could have adverse effects: ‘How the state arms and presents itself could wake animosities in the public against those that are well protected’. In the search for Schleyer, all forces mobilised including local police departments, the Federal Criminal Agency, the Office for the Protection of the Constitution and the Military Counterintelligence Service on an enormous scale. As *Der Spiegel* (1977c, translated by author) summarised:

Already that evening [of the Schleyer kidnapping], police forces ... were posted to motorways, train stations, airports – all in the search for the 16 suspected terrorists, whose mug shots had been flaring on TV screens, including details given by the Federal Criminal Agency on their height, voice and particular characteristic traits.

BKA and special forces became increasingly frustrated as the investigation continued. Despite its unprecedented scope, the investigation had not led to Schleyer or his kidnappers.<sup>6</sup> In the 44 days of the Schleyer kidnapping, West Germany resembled ‘a besieged state’ (Hanshew 2012a, p. 6).

The imagery of the ‘besieged state’ (Ibid.) further meant that ‘the line separating normality and emergency became blurred’ (Katzenstein 1993, p. 272). For understanding

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<sup>6</sup> One piece of evidence that had pointed to an apartment in Köln-Erfstadt where the kidnappers had held Schleyer hostage got lost in bureaucracy. It could have been the decisive piece of information to find Schleyer. The letter and the bureaucratic failures to examine its relevance for the investigation, were later investigated in a government commissioned report.

practices of ‘discursive anchor[ing]’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) this “blurriness” is significant because it further indicated “blurriness” about the state’s responsibility: ‘In trying to anticipate possible threats to state security, the police changed from reacting to social developments to trying to prevent them from arising in the first place’ (Katzenstein 1993, p. 272).

Seen in both Schmidt’s and Kohls narrative sensemaking, and through narrative enactment, it appeared that state agency was increasingly read as prevention. Paradoxically, however, this also meant that the government made itself increasingly susceptible to being responsible should prevention fail. The demonstration of state strength – urgently needed for Schmidt to substantiate his narrative sensemaking and state credibility – thus inadvertently meant that the state’s responsibility increasingly included additional aspects of prevention. The increasing inclusion, however, also meant that the state’s role in preventing crime inscribed itself around the sensemaking of the Schleyer kidnapping and ultimately set new ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) for the state’s role in the prevention of terrorist violence.

Much of this, can be explained by the narrative landscape examined in the previous sections of this chapter. Chancellor Schmidt saw himself increasingly pressured by the erosion of ontological security forged by the opposition, the media and among the general public. The contact ban was one way to enact state narratives around the events of the Schleyer kidnapping; erecting roadblocks and stationing police forces across the country was another. However, while the narrative enactment sought to address the opposition and cater to demands of the general public, it did little to substantiate Chancellor Schmidt’s narrative of continuity and stability.

The “reality” of West Germany as a ‘besieged state’ (Hanshew 2012a, p. 6) did not match with the stability, social cohesion and continuity of state identity that Schmidt forged. Images, such as panzers joining streets were compelling and carried narrativity that did not help to substantiate the government’s sensemaking of continuity. Simply put, the narrativity of action served the opposition’s sensemaking more than that it helped to substantiate Schmidt’s narratives. Narrative enactment did not align with Chancellor Schmidt’s emphasis that the state was not in a crisis; a crisis that from the outside appeared to be nothing short of what the opposition parties had narrated it to be, namely democracy’s last battle.

## 4.4. Narrative Projection and Reception

The projection of narratives during the Schleyer kidnapping played a crucial role in the sensemaking of the event and, further, helped to lay the groundwork for what Musolff (1996) has considered a ‘moral panic’. This section will first provide an overview of the media environment of 1977 to understand how political actors worked *through* this environment to place narratives. Subsequently, this section will discuss Schmidt’s news management during the kidnapping. Schmidt’s news management was most dominantly a strategy to deprive terrorists of participating in narrative sensemaking processes and for information on government strategy not to become public. However, it further contributed – inadvertently – to the opposition’s narratives to increasingly shape the public debate.

### 4.4.1. The Media Environment of 1977: Narrating in the Broadcast Era

During the late 1970s, the media environment can be described by the concept ‘Broadcast Era’ (Merrin 2014), in which ‘national and satellite television and the press enjoy[ed] a lock on what mass audiences witnessed’ and in which ‘[governments] could exercise relative control over journalists’ access and reporting’ (Miskimmon, O’Loughlin and Roselle 2017, pp. 10-11).

While political actors had the relative ability to control communication in the ‘Broadcast Era’ (Merrin 2014), the late 1970s also demonstrated that tension in the relationship between media and state would soon bring about its more decisive re-evaluation. The Spiegel Affair of 1962, for example, did not help to alleviate growing concerns that state control over the media was too forceful.<sup>7</sup> This tension played a decisive role in the build-up to the Schleyer kidnapping, most notably expressed in the notorious clash between the Springer press and the student movement of 1968. As Jeremy Varon summarised (2004, p. 113): ‘Much of the West German public and the media viewed the New Left as a red menace that did the bidding of the Eastern Bloc. This was especially true of Axel Springer’s conservative tabloids’.

Since the days of the student movement, the Springer press, in particular, emphasised a ‘one-sided scandalisation of “red violence”’ (Terhoeven 2014, p. 86, translated by author).

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<sup>7</sup> The Spiegel Affair of 1962 was the escalation of a feud between Minister of Defence Franz Josef Strauß (CSU) and Rudolf Augstein, the editor of the magazine Der Spiegel. In the autumn of 1962 this translated into a full-blown government crisis, which contributed to the collapse of the Konrad Adenauer government. To date the Spiegel Affair is considered a milestone in the defence of press freedom in post-war Germany. For an evaluation of the Spiegel Affair see Bunn 1966; Gimbel 1965; Schoenbaum 1968.

The one-sided perspective played a crucial role also for how the media reported on the RAF terrorism during the Schleyer kidnapping, not least where a ‘substantial part of the media amplified and multiplied’ narratives fostered in particular by the opposition (Ibid.). How the press presented ‘red violence’ (Ibid.) also meant that the Springer press in particular, decisively contributed to the ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) of terrorist violence as mainly stemming from the political left and perpetrated by the younger generations. Further, media outlets were still subject to their institutional logics, and terrorism made good media copy. For the analysis in this chapter it is, therefore, crucial to acknowledge that ‘the media’s mediation of terrorism is quite probably *the* Gordian knot in liberal democracies’ counterterrorism efforts’ (Hanshew 2016, p. 383, italics in original).

The ‘Broadcast Era’ (Merrin 2014) was further characterised by an increasing concentration of dominant news outlets that had a considerable market share and did not help to diversify the media landscape (Birkner 2016, p. 154). However, ‘television presented a new set of challenges for governments in the 1970s’ because ‘[t]hough European states remained important actors in the broadcasting field, they were unable to control news output and could not impose their agenda on television coverage as easily as before’ (Hanshew 2016, p. 383). For the Schleyer kidnapping, these developments were important because despite the government’s news ban (see section 4.4.2.), broadcasters ‘contributed to the circulation of powerful visual images ... whose persuasive capacities rested on their interpretive openness and broad cultural resonance, and for this reason frequently defied state efforts to impose a closed narrative’ (Ibid.).

The circulation of powerful images became strikingly influential during the Schleyer kidnapping. Not only did images of the kidnapped Schleyer contribute to the sensemaking of the event, but existing images – such as the much-debated deathbed picture of Holger Meins, who had died of starvation in 1974 – re-circulated and questioned governmental sensemaking.

Further to this point, whilst the news gag order (see section 4.4.2.) implemented Chancellor Schmidt’s ‘news management’ (Schmid and De Graaf 1982, p.154), the images that did come to light influenced the reading of the events decisively. In this way, for example, different images of the increasingly exhausted Schleyer in captivity became well-known and well-remembered pictures of the German Autumn. In the memorialisation of the events, it was thus pictures taken by the terrorists that “stayed” – not alternative ones offered by the German state. The source of images mattered because it also meant that the reading of the events through time became substantiated through visual narratives provided and produced by the RAF, even if with adverse effect to their original objectives.

#### 4.4.2. News Management and Alternative Narratives

In addition to the crisis management units, Chancellor Schmidt sought to establish a form of narrative control by implementing a news gag order. The news gag order decisively influenced narrative projection. With the members of the crisis management units bound by confidentiality agreements and with the news media unable to report on the events, Chancellor Schmidt, in theory, should have been able to hold considerable control over narrative projection.

Alex P. Schmid and Janny de Graaf (1982, p.154) assessed the extraordinary magnitude of the news ban in their volume on violence as communication in arguing that ‘what happened in the Schleyer case goes beyond anything so far practiced in peacetime in Western democracies in recent times’. To a degree, even terrorist narratives were controlled by the state because it was the state, and more precisely, Chancellor Schmidt, who decided which to publish and which to keep secret. The media mostly kept to the agreement with the state and became ‘an integral part of an authoritarian concept of the state’ (Kraushaar 2006, p. 1018, translated by author). It followed that Chancellor Schmidt attempted to work state power *through* media. Further, he used the news media to communicate with the terrorists, at the same time as he tried to deprive RAF of their ability to project their narratives. In an attempt to demonstrate the resolve of the strong state, but also to avoid an emerging inner-political polarisation, the institutionalised narrative controls made it almost impossible for information to emerge outside of what the government wanted to disclose. However, narratives do not need updated information to become compelling.

Whereas the news ban gave Chancellor Schmidt unprecedented powers to project narratives of the state and the event during the Schleyer kidnapping, it could not prevent adverse effects of the media’s narrative dynamic and logic. With news outlets mostly stripped of their ability to report on the event’s developments, they deployed a form of ‘alternative reporting, which consisted of speculations about the manhunt, “expert” opinions and their commentaries’ (Musolff 1996, p. 312, translated by author). As Musolff elaborates: ‘[during] this period, war metaphors of RAF attacks experienced a downright “boom”’ (Ibid.) The escalation during the Schleyer kidnapping was, therefore, partly fuelled *because* the government did not allow sufficient space for alternative narratives.

Different additional actors sought to engage with the narrative landscape and thus added to the speculative content by newspapers. For example, Schleyer’s wife, Waltrude Schleyer (in Hoppe 2017, translated by author) published three letters in the tabloid *Bild*, between September 11 and September 21, 1977, in which she demanded that the government

exchanged Schleyer and saved his life. She put pressure on the government in writing that ‘above all what helps in these terrible times is to know of your inner strength ... I am convinced I will see my husband again’ (Ibid.). In doing so, she not only sought to harness empathy for her husband, but also increased the pressure on Schmidt and his government to save Schleyer’s life.

Waltrude Schleyer further and inadvertently helped to join in with the communication strategy of the RAF. The kidnapers strategically filmed proof that Schleyer was alive and attempted to circulate images, videos and voice recordings for dissemination. While most of the communication sent by the RAF was not made public – contrary to the kidnapers’ demands – the RAF was well aware of the potential of communication strategies. Although it had miscalculated its approach during the Schleyer kidnapping because it did not foresee that the news ban posed incredible constraints over their ability to project narratives, the RAF was still actively engaged in driving its media campaign. From the moment of imprisonment of the first-generation RAF members, photos had been essential to their strategy, which did not change during the kidnapping (Klonk 2017, pp. 194-195): ‘The successful use of the images of the dead terrorist Holger Meins – who had died as a result of hunger strikes – demonstrated that even photos from captivity were powerful propaganda material’.

The photos were powerful, firstly because they served as a means to transport a message and to substantiate narratives. In Meins’ case, it heroised and fetishized the terrorist, placed him in the ephemeral sphere of a martyr who – much like all others – had died in the pursuit of their collective cause. The martyrdom that these pictures sought to insinuate also contradicted those government narratives that denied the political or “higher” cause of terrorist violence.

Further, the news gag order could further not prevent the emergence of alternative narratives and saw an increasing divide between media outlets calling for stricter measures and those that warned of hysteria. The CSU party’s newspaper *Bayernkurier* (in Probst 2017b, translated by author) called for the ‘harshest measures’ and was unsurprisingly supportive of the CDU/CSU stance that the government was lacking will to pursue a crackdown of the terrorist. Likewise, commentator Wilfried Hertz-Eichenrode (1977b, p. 3, translated by author) of *Die Welt* perceived the Schleyer kidnapping as proof that the terrorists were able ‘to conduct a bloody campaign across countries, continents and oceans’.

The act of war reading of the events created a heavy burden on the credibility of Chancellor Schmidt’s narrative of continuity and stability. It further made the identification with Schmidt’s proposed identity narrative difficult. A state at war had crucially different

implications than a narrative projection that substantiated Chancellor Schmidt's reading of stability. It appeared that 'until the end of the German Autumn 1977, the conservative strategy of discursive erosion prevailed', not least where the 'hegemonic shifts in the "terrorism"-discourse correspond with a more general "tendency turn"' (Büchse 2007, p. 309, translated by author), advocated by the conservatives.

While the metaphor of war spiralled in the media, some voices sought to warn of an increasing hysteria. Hans Heigert (in Probst 2017a, translated by author), editor in chief of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, for example, responded to Mann's assessment that West Germany found itself in a 'new type of civil war' by arguing that 'we are neither at war nor in an extraordinary emergency'. The voices advocating restraint became more prominent around the discussion of the implementation of the contact ban. Heigert (Ibid.) for example, wrote that while 'the challenge posed by the political mafia is extreme', it did not 'justify emergency laws neither on a moral nor on a legal basis'. Rudolf Augstein (*Der Spiegel* 1977a, translated by author), editor in chief of *Der Spiegel* commented in a five-part series on sympathisers called 'murder begins with evil words' that:

Our terrorists are by no means unsuccessful. Of course, they cannot create order ...  
Nevertheless, their terrorist energy is enough to hit the existing order and society, at its core  
... The rule of law is longer a taboo, and it is now at the disposal of the terrorists.

Augstein (1977, p.29) further criticised that it was misleading to brush over terrorists as common criminals as this was to ignore their ethical-political motives. Some political actors reacted promptly and harshly. Federal Minister of the Interior Maihofer and CSU Member of Parliament Hans Klein considered it the 'most appalling publication in Germany since 1945' (in Musolff 1996, p. 142, translated by author).

On October 6, 1977, the magazine *Stern* (in Probst 2010b, translated by author) similarly published an interview with Heinrich Böll, who had been frequently attacked by *Bild* and the Springer press more broadly and who had been portrayed as a figurehead of the sympathiser scene. In the interview, the Nobel Prize-winning author criticised the 'unbelievable nastiness of the *Bild* in pulling my family into this' and he 'had reason to fear' (Böll in Ibid.) for his family. Author and colleague Günther Grass (in Ibid.) also supported Böll in arguing that he had been subject to a 'witch hunt' and that the Federal President should protect Böll from the attacks. *Die Welt* (in Ibid.), reacted promptly and commented:

But we have not heard any refutation, no acknowledgement to the young people that [the intellectuals] have advised them wrongly ... The entanglement goes too deeply. Apparently, more blood will have to flow until at least the influence of the intellectual fathers ends; we cannot hope for introspection.

The media's reaction to the Schleyer kidnapping thus cannot be summarised by describing the adherence to narratives proposed by either the government or the opposition. Inasmuch as official narratives clashed with their enactment, and since the opposition continued to erode the ontological status of the state, the media's reaction to the Schleyer kidnapping was conflicted. If anything, the media carried forward the confusion over the events and discussed the anxiety around the Schleyer kidnapping as closely connected to the role of the state and society. The link between the kidnapping and the role of the state may be the most important finding from reviewing media data. It did not matter so much which narratives different media adhered to, but instead that it appeared that all political actors had successfully linked the Schleyer kidnapping to a negotiation of West German identity narratives.

## 4.5. Contextualising Anxiety, Temporality, Agency and Identity Narratives

The discussion in this chapter has pointed to all four analytical markers (see Chapter 3). This section will bring them together to discuss the implications of these markers for identity narrative negotiation during the Schleyer kidnapping.

### 4.5.1. Anxiety

The analytical marker of anxiety weaves through the sensemaking of the Schleyer kidnapping on four levels: (1) Structural anxiety or ontological insecurity about the viability of West German democracy (see section 4.2.); (2) Anxiety and insecurity around terrorism both in terms of possible future terrorist attacks and the state's response (see section 4.3.) (3) Anxiety concerning social cohesion and participatory citizenship, primarily narrated by Schmidt and the SPD (see sections 4.3.1-4.3.3.); and (4) Anxiety concerning the loss of order and traditional values, mainly narrated by Helmut Kohl and the opposition (see sections 4.3.4. and 4.3.5.). In examining the analytical marker of anxiety, it is essential to acknowledge that 'one can or should [not] divorce the state from society, society from terrorists, or terrorists from the state when writing the history of 1970s terrorism' (Hanshew 2016, p. 382). Anxiety around ontological insecurity is pervasive because it interacts with and crucially links the private, the social, the national, the political and so forth.

For example, scholarship in which 'media is still too often a stand-in for society' (Hanshew 2016, p. 386), also ill-recognises how audiences and people actively take part in

narrative sensemaking and are not mere bystanders in the process of how events travel through time. On the one hand, anger and tougher calls for state action helped the ‘moral panic’ (Musolff 1996) and amplified anxiety; on the other hand, the increasing uncertainty about the role of citizens, their duties and rights, and uncertainty concerning the guiding moral parameters also created anxiety around society’s identity narrative commitments.

In examining the analytical marker of anxiety, it is thus crucial to acknowledge how different actors express anxiety and how anxiety expresses itself, but also how actors use it strategically. Helmut Kohl and the CDU/CSU opposition party – also because they were less bound by pressures than Schmidt and the government – were able to conjure an image of the state as being at the brink of collapse, however much aided by some media outlets and the government’s narrative enactment. Further, the RAF also relied heavily on anxiety, the “propaganda of the deed” and their plans to ‘throw bombs into the consciousness of masses’ (Balz 2014, p. 271). The different levels of anxiety point to an “unsettledness” of consciousness, that is, an unsettledness of the *Self* and, therefore, ontological insecurity. The Schleyer kidnapping was not only a political crisis, but a crisis of the consciousness of the *Self* and thus posed fundamental questions as to West German democratic viability. These fundamental questions were existential as to the stability of the *Self*. It follows that the structural anxieties exacerbated the anxiety around the Schleyer kidnapping and thus provided a fruitful ground for the negotiation of state identity narratives.

#### 4.5.2. Temporality

Crises are imbued with temporal claims, and the Schleyer kidnapping was not an exception. The analytical marker of temporality presents itself through anxiety; that is questions concerning the past, present and future of the *Self*. It is further presented through the temporal claims around the Schleyer kidnapping, such as change, continuity, timelessness and singularity. Much of the discussion on temporality links to questions on the historical space (Metzler 2019, p. 25, translated by author) of the Schleyer kidnapping, terrorism and counterterrorism. As will be discussed in section 4.5.4., the ‘historical space’ (Ibid.) of the Schleyer kidnapping helped its significance for ‘discursively anchor[ing]’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) terrorism, counterterrorism and the moral boundaries of violence.

The temporal claims inherent to the Schleyer kidnapping further substantiated its “eventness”, through which the singularity of the event furthered the space in which actors could and did negotiate state identity narratives. The construction of the event’s singularity

manifested through claims of urgency, imminently tied to existential questions as to the strength or fragility of West German democracy. While the opposition sharpened this urgency by claiming West Germany was fighting its most existential battle, Schmidt and the government more broadly, linked urgency to preventative counterterrorism measures. Schmidt's emphasis on the continuity of German state identity also linked to the call not to "miss" anything, to be attentive and to be alert.

The analytical marker of temporality further highlighted the importance of discussing state futures through the prism of the Schleyer kidnapping. Event narratives not only made sense of the event but also "tested" grounds for future visions of the state in the negotiation of West German identity narratives. The testing ground for these visions brought the future into the present. For Helmut Kohl and the opposition ontological insecurity was used to "warn" that the Schleyer kidnapping would be what the future looked like – chaos, anarchy and deviance – if the state continued its course of 'suicidal liberalisation' (Roegele 1977, translated by author). In addition, envisioning futures and negotiating state identity during compounded event spaces crucially links to 'usable pasts' (Anderson 2006). Weimar served as a cognitive framework. It was thus not only a structural condition through which the Schleyer kidnapping was made sense of, but also a strategic tool to underline the existential nature of the threat (Kohl and opposition) and to underline the threat stemming from a fragmented society (Schmidt and the SPD).

#### 4.5.3. Agency

The analytical marker of agency during the Schleyer kidnapping expressed itself in different ways. On the one hand, Schmidt and the government narrated the purview of state agency as (1) providing strength and assurances and preventing future terrorist attacks, (2) as needing to forge social cohesion and encourage participatory citizenship, and (3) as maintaining German identity narrative commitments to make sense of the crisis (reiteration). On the other hand, Kohl and the opposition understood state agency (1) to include a ferocious crackdown of the terrorists and demonstrate state strength, (2) as ordering and setting moral boundaries, and (3) as restoring traditional values and provision law and order (restoration).

Through these broader movements in identity narrative negotiation, that is movement narrated through reiteration and restoration, agency during the Schleyer kidnapping can be characterised as falling between 'muted agency' and 'creative-constitutive agency' (Berenskoetter 2020, p. 282) among political actors. Schmidt, for example, aimed to incorporate the crisis into existing identity narratives by arguing that it was a lack of

identification that caused the crisis, which points to ‘muted agency’ (Ibid.) However, he also had ‘creative-constitutive’ (Ibid.) agentic moments in the narrations of state identity, especially where he encouraged participatory citizenship and a cohesive society. The ‘creative-constitutive’ (Ibid.) aspect for Kohl and the opposition was visible at moments at which they forged narratives that sought to create mechanisms to restore order. Both cases also rest decisively on anxiety and temporality as the Schleyer kidnapping ‘destabilize[d] conceptions of being in time’ (Ibid.).

Further to this, while the strategic objectives and future visions between the government and the opposition were fundamentally different, they all had in common that agency linked to designing a future for the state, society and the guiding parameters of social and political life.

#### 4.5.4. Identity Narratives, Identity Narrative Negotiation and Discursive Anchoring

The Schleyer kidnapping and the German Autumn more generally produced ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561). The ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) set preconditions for how terrorist violence was understood and for how the state was supposed to react to cases of future terrorist violence. To this point, the Schleyer kidnapping ‘discursively anchor[ed]’ (Ibid.) terrorism through the prism of terrorism from the political left and specifically, an understanding of terrorism that was defined as violence directed against the state. In setting ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) as violence against the state, political actors advanced a reading of terrorism that also denied the political cause of terrorists and terrorism, irrespective of whether violence was the wrong means to achieving these political objectives. While much of the attention to terrorism has since focused on Islamist-extremist terrorism, the significance of the ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.), was, for example, reflected in the reaction to protests around the G7 Summit in Hamburg in 2017 when police forces and protestors clashed violently. *Cicero* writer Alexander Grau (2017), for example, commented on the protests at the G7 Summit by saying that ‘children of the lower-middle-class are playing revolution’, which invoked the close link between generations and left-wing activism and left-wing violence. Further research could also examine how national crime statistics and the recent resurgence of the fear of left-wing terrorism (NDR 2020; Bewader and Naber 2020) still reflect on the ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) set during the German Autumn and the Schleyer kidnapping specifically.

Insufficient political attention to the structural problem of right-wing terrorism – strikingly exposed by the National Socialist Underground (*Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund*, NSU) – highlights the compelling and persuasive nature of such ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) and also have ‘limited the scholarly analysis of what constitutes right-wing terrorism’ (Hanshew 2016). Further to this, Germany’s Interior Minister Horst Seehofer (CSU) has recently argued that he did not want to commission a report on racial profiling by the police as he did not see a structural problem with racism in German police forces and that now was not the time for a report (*ZEIT ONLINE* 2020). Whether or not there is a problem in German police forces to address the structural problem of either racist profiling practices or far-right extremist forces cannot be discussed in detail here, but how actors assess and show willingness to confront structural problems is also a result of how some problems are set in ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) and some are not.

Either way, anchoring terrorism through the negotiation of identity narratives did not solve the uncertainty or anxiety around West German identity, despite the pervasiveness of anchors. Set within the broader context of the 1970s and questions on the guiding parameters of society, ‘the decade’s terrorism debates as well as the media-mediated experience of terrorism can be viewed as expressive of public fears regarding the incorporation of liberal, even radical values into mainstream society’ (Hanshew 2016, p. 401). It follows that while ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) emerge and are constructed around the uncertainty which they seek to settle, they are also always larger than merely “settling” the definition of a concept. In this way, terrorism and its ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) around the Schleyer kidnapping also constructed state identity narratives that outlined the state’s purview of agency. For example, the non-negotiation with terrorists, the attack against the state, the preventive reading of state agency in combatting terrorism are never only about the settling of definitions. They also speak to attempts to settle events; events that political actors narrated through identity narrative negotiation. At the same time, the ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) around the Schleyer kidnapping posed as many questions as they suggested answers. Was it that the ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) of terrorist violence suggested that the West German state and its people should respond to future attacks with resolve and force? Or did the ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) teach political actors and the public that the flexibility of identity commitments was more dangerous than the acts themselves?

How the events have become part of German cultural memory speak to these questions. The events have certainly caused a proliferation of novels such as Heinrich Böll’s (1993) *The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum* in recent decades. The Schleyer kidnapping and

the German Autumn are also still in the process of their socio-cultural sedimentation. The events are, after all, ‘restless by nature as historical subjects attempt alternately to bind or set them free’ and ‘[i]f [events] are completely bound, they die out of lack of interest, uptake reconfiguration, or renewal’ (Wagner-Pacifici, 2017, p. 154). That is to say, if narratives of the event become settled, they are bound. The German Autumn and the Schleyer kidnapping, however, are far from bound; their meaning far from settled. The events of 1977 and the Schleyer kidnapping in particular, remain unboundedly controversial to date.

Their historicisation is frequently subject to discussion and contestation. An exhibition scheduled for 2005, by the Berlin museum *Kunst-Werke* had to open with a delay because an intense debate surrounding the exhibition’s content and financial support had erupted. Similarly, in 2010, the release of two former third-generation RAF members from prison sparked a heated debate about the unanswered questions of the 1970’s terror (Schwennicke 2010). Wolfgang Schäuble (2003, translated by author) declared in 2003 that: ‘The liberal democracy proved to be stronger. That is how it has to be, and that is what we need to remember, not through mistaken mystification but with a full understanding of what happened’. Schäuble’s statement serves as a reminder that a myriad of forces insists on the authority over and the stakes in the process of writing a state’s history. For Wagner-Pacifici (2017, p.24):

The declaration of victory is an attempt of formation, of sedimentation of fleeting events. It is certainly difficult to keep our focus, as political subjects and actors, and as analysts, on events on the move. Our urge to place boundaries, to declare events members of a particular type, to declare them over, to periodize, and thus ultimately to escape the relentless stress of managing the tension between constancy and change, form and flow—all this makes it hard to keep track of events.

The German Autumn proved to be the young Federal Republic’s litmus test, but also because its political actors narrated it as that. Chancellor Schmidt (1977, 08/50, p. 3757, translated by author) declared that the German Autumn had fostered a feeling of unity, i.e. ‘we-ness’ and ‘solidarity’; a declaration of victory by substantiating the narratives he so eagerly had sought to establish during the kidnapping. Helmut Kohl (1977, 08/50, p. 3761) argued instead that the unity had been forged by suffering and gratitude after the release of the hostages of the Landshut hijacking:

Our public had to bear the news on the petty murder of Hanns Martin Schleyer at a moment of gratitude and hope felt by all of us. It was a justified gratitude about the happy ending to the hostage drama ... and the hope that this is the turn in the fight of the liberal state against national and international terrorism.

All declarations of victory of the strong liberal democracy, however, have also been tainted by collective memories of scenes of destruction, of police forces, barbed-wire fences, of the “wanted” posters of RAF members and the kidnapped Schleyer. In the process of identity narrative sedimentation, these collective memories will cause friction with the historicisation efforts of political actors.

## 4.6. Conclusion

To be sure, the Schleyer kidnapping initiated a crisis that questioned the then young West German democracy in an unprecedented way. Withal forceful attempts especially by the opposition to ignite a “moral-ideological turn”, it appeared that Helmut Kohl was not able to challenge the ontological status of the state beyond 1977. At the same time, the Schleyer kidnapping posed a fundamental challenge to and crisis for the young Republic. West German terrorism, which escalated and reached its peak with the Schleyer kidnapping, had exacerbated anxiety around Germany’s ontological security. It served as ‘*the* key moment for the modification of social-liberal reforms and the transformation of the Federal Republic’s political culture during the seventies’ (Büchse 2007, p. 312, translated by author, italics in original). While the effects of such modification and transformation cannot be mono-causally linked to the sensemaking of the Schleyer kidnapping, it is nevertheless vital to underline the significance of the events for West Germany. How political actors sought to place desire for future visions of West German identity commitments in the contestational space that the event provided is thus of crucial importance. The Schleyer kidnapping became more than the immediate event; it was narratively forged as an event that alongside ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) also negotiated identity commitments around them.

In the negotiation, West Germany’s already ontologically insecure status was a powerful resource for both the government and the opposition to explore the possibility of identity narrative negotiation. It follows that the strategic erosion of the state’s ontological status was also a powerful tool for actors to deploy, to achieve short-term political objectives and to suggest movement to identity narratives. It appears that state, media and people readily bought into understanding the erosion of ontological security as a pathway to populist choices. Notwithstanding – and possibly because of – the complex interaction of actors and narrative sensemaking around the events, pervasive anxiety as to the state’s ontological security characterised the 44 days of Schleyer kidnapping.

However, Hanshew (2012a) has argued that West Germany re-established and potentially strengthened its ontological security as a product of the negotiation of terror and the state's response after the Schleyer kidnapping. Hachmeister (2004, p. 400, translated by author) conceptualised 1977 as the 'year of Germany's state becoming'. The analysis in this chapter, however, contends that the process of re-establishing ontological security after the insecurity of the Schleyer kidnapping was not straightforward and smooth. The event's meaning for the public and West German identity narratives remain unclear, despite settled doubts that the state was unable to defend itself.

Collective memory pioneer Maurice Halbwachs (1992, p. 30) argues to this point that 'crucial public events leave deep imprints in the minds of direct participants'. The significance of the Schleyer kidnapping for West German state identity narratives thus went beyond a mere reaffirmation of them. The anxiety around the willingness to stick to identity commitments as well as the indeterminate reading of the events for identity narratives left the events with a notion of unresolvedness, rather than their smooth incorporation into West Germany's national biography. The Schleyer kidnapping left a dent in the national biography of the state, especially where political actors used the anxiety and uncertainty for political objectives. The writing process of a national biography does not only attempt to smoothen out ruptures. Instead, events also form part of a national biography when they are intersubjectively contested and when they are acknowledged as a challenge to the state's ontological status. Therefore, events that are collectively shared and incorporated into the national biography speak to this process of contestation.

Moreover, the agency in the process of setting the 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) of terrorist violence 'manufactured consent on a wide scale' (Balz 2014, p. 268). The proximity of the state and the people was neither an accidental result of the kidnapping nor did it directly speak to the success of Schmidt's narratives of social cohesion. Instead, as suggested here, the closing in of state and people also resulted from the negotiation of identity narratives, with Schmidt aiming to forge narratives of a cohesive society and Kohl seeking to delimit moral boundaries through the law and order narrative.

The story of the post-war Federal Republic – a story of its dark past, economic reconstruction, the becoming of a democratic state towards German unification – is generally considered a successful one (see Goetz 2001). The German Autumn appears to be a dark spot in this story; a dark spot that helps to substantiate its myths.

More critically, it is crucial to evaluate the enormous powers behind the strategic erosion of a state's ontological status; a power that is certainly dependent on a myriad of

forces and contextual factors. However, when these factors align and are aligned and when political actors seek to erode the state's ontological status for short-term political gains, it can tamper with the democratic fabric of long-term democratic identity narratives. It can open possibilities for a withdrawal or rejection of these narratives. The lessons from the murkier spots of national biographies should, if anything, be a reminder for the inherent danger in using this tool to achieve political objectives.

# Chapter 5

## September 11, 2001

### Negotiating a Mature Germany in a Multilateral World Order

#### 5.1. Introduction

Chapter 4 discussed how domestic terrorism produced a fruitful ground for the exploration of negotiating the state's ontological status around terrorist violence and its implications for state identity. In the broader context of this thesis, Chapter 5 will examine whether the argument around state identity negotiation does apply only when terrorism occurs domestically, or whether political actors can similarly enable agency when an event occurs outside of the state's territory, such was the case with September 11, 2001.<sup>8</sup>

This chapter will ask specifically what role existing anchors on terrorist violence played and how political actors sought to set new ones around the events of 9/11. Did the location of the terrorist attack play a role for the narration of 9/11 for German identity narratives given that 9/11 did not occur in Germany? How did the context – after the fall of the Berlin Wall and German unification – provide a framework through which German policymakers negotiated 9/11 for German identity narratives?

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<sup>8</sup> For readability, September 11, 2001, will be written as 9/11 hereafter, but it is important to acknowledge that naming the event is narratively significant and an act of contributing to the event's socio-cultural sedimentation. As Mark Redfield (2007, pp. 56-58) observes: 'The name-date itself, I suggest, stages a double movement of inscription and effacement such that an act of naming becomes isomorphic with the structure of traumatic damage, on the one hand, and with the workings of technical reproducibility and mass mediation, on the other'.

At the onset of 9/11, Germany had just become a unified country in 1990 after the fall of the Berlin Wall alongside the collapse of the Soviet Union. Domestically, unification caused immense economic, administrative and societal challenges. After all, the two Germanys had operated under fundamentally different political and ideological systems. The dissolution of the Soviet Union also dissolved the ever-dominant threat posed to West Germany. The end of the Cold War ushered the world into a new era of power dynamics. By famously proclaiming *The End of History*, Francis Fukuyama (1989, p. 3) went as far as to declare the ‘unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism’.

However, on September 11, 2001, the world witnessed a series of terror attacks in New York and Washington, D.C. When at 08:46 am aeroplane American Airlines 11 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York, CNN reported on the incident three minutes after the fact. The immediate, extensive and global media coverage that followed, made 9/11 a global media event (Monahan 2010) with significant and long-lasting implications for the US and the world more broadly. For many, ‘even as an event understood conventionally as a distinctly unique historical break, September 11 pressed at the limits of recognition by constantly shifting its grounds, both literally and metaphorically’ (Wagner-Pacifici 2010, p. 1352). As a researcher specifically interested in the link between identity narratives and events, 9/11 is too big to ignore.

9/11 resulted in a range of far-reaching consequences. To start with, US President George W. Bush vowed to win the war against terrorism and zeroed in on Al-Qaeda – the group that had claimed responsibility for the attacks – headed by Osama Bin Laden. Shortly after 9/11, a pervasive and compelling discourse on the “War on Terror” began to form. The “War on Terror” narrative has since reached a degree of institutionalisation that has so far been impossible to break away from (Holland 2014, p.2).<sup>9</sup> In particular, the Bush Administration instrumentalised the “War on Terror” narrative to justify the US invasion of Afghanistan less than a month after 9/11 to dismantle Al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban government. The Bush Administration further drew on the “War on Terror” narrative to justify the 2003 invasion of Iraq, based on the suspicion that President Saddam Hussein was producing weapons of mass destruction, none of which were ever found (see Jamieson 2007; Krebs and Lobaz 2007; Kull, Ramsay and Lewis 2003; Logevall 2010). The Bush Administration further opened Guantanamo Bay in 2002 and implemented a swath of

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<sup>9</sup> An extensive extant body of literature has examined the US discursive and narrative construction of September 11, 2001, and the “War on Terror”: Croft 2006; Collins and Glover 2002; Hodges 2011; Holland 2012; Jackson 2005; Jarvis 2009; Krebs and Jackson 2007; Silberstein 2002. On the level of institutionalisation and the difficulty to withdraw from the “War on Terror” during the Obama Administration, see Bentley and Holland ed. 2014

domestic counterterrorism legislation that infringed upon basic democratic principles under the umbrella justification of extraordinary war powers (see Falk 2007; Finn 2010; Griffin 2013; Nelson 2008).

Across Germany, the political and public shock following 9/11 was viscerally felt and solidarity with the US expressed immediately across the nation. On September 14, 2001, 200,000 people and almost the entirety of the political elite gathered to commemorate the victims of the attacks. Despite the shock of 9/11, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder was quick to form narratives around the events. On both the evening of 9/11 and in his government address on September 12, 2001, he promised Germany's 'unwavering solidarity' with the US (Schröder 2001, 14/187, p. 18293, translated by author). At this point, it was unclear what unwavering solidarity included, in terms of what the US would ask for and what Germany was willing and able to give

In Germany, 9/11 also caused immediate legislative consequences. Although not known in its entirety then, it soon became clear that ringleaders of the attacks had planned them in Hamburg, which made the terror threat even more feasible domestically. Within a week, the first of two 'sweeping anti-terror bills' became legislatively enacted 'prescribing the most far-reaching new security-related measures for the country since those adopted during the German Autumn of 1977' (Hockenos 2008, p. 290). Interior Minister Otto Schily was the author of the so-called "Schily Package I and II", which curbed regulation on data protection and immigration and included a financing package for counterterrorism measures. Some of the measures, such as amendments to the Aviation Security Act (*Luftsicherheitsgesetz – LuftSiG*), which would have authorised the German military to shoot down an aeroplane when used as a weapon against human life, were found unconstitutional by the Federal Constitutional Court. While the focus in this chapter is not on domestic legislation, it is contextually crucial to note that the speedy and partly unconstitutional legislative reaction to 9/11 demonstrated the extent to which the events carried significance for German policymakers.

Despite the significant domestic consequences of 9/11, this chapter will focus on the negotiation of Germany's international position and identity negotiation. An analysis of 9/11 through Germany's foreign political identity narrative commitments provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on the possibility of actors' agency in the sensemaking of an event that occurred and is also powerfully narrated elsewhere. System narratives co-produced uncertainty and engaged with questions on the future of the international order with an impact for German identity narratives. Political actors attempted to integrate these questions into the

domestic contestation process. Further still, where international actors – most dominantly the US – had narrated expectations to Germany, German political actors sought to react to and make sense of these expectations through identity narratives.

How a country projects itself and sees the functioning of its identity within a given international context is a crucial element of its identity narratives more broadly. This chapter unpacks the domestic negotiation processes that belie the formation of identity narratives, whether they concerned Germany's status in the world or legislation at home. In the words of Susanne Kirchhoff (2010, p. 279, translated by author): 'Foreign policy becomes a means in the construction of [a state's] identity that influences and is relevant for domestic policies and politics'. A changing international role further requires domestic audiences to understand and identify with the consequences of the identity narrative redescription, even and especially when they concern foreign policy.

This chapter will firstly outline the context and introduce the dominant actors for German political sensemaking of 9/11. Most dominantly, the chapter will focus on Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SPD), Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer (*Bündnis 90/DIE GRÜNEN*, The Greens) and members of the opposition Wolfgang Schäuble, Friedrich Merz and Angela Merkel (all *Christlich Demokratische Union*, CDU). This chapter will examine the narrative formation by these actors by expanding on how they reacted to international expectations directed at Germany and to which strategic end. It will further explore the strategic narration of rupture and the nature of the attacks as a means to forge an environment in which political actors could place redescriptions of identity narratives. This chapter will further investigate the engagement in Afghanistan and the decision to refrain from participating in the 2003 US-led Iraq War as a means to enact narrative identity commitments.

In terms of the overall contention of this thesis, the movement narrative of maturity was an instructive and powerful means forged particularly by Chancellor Schröder to narrate changes to German identity narratives. He seized 9/11 as a domestically viable moment for a redescription of German identity narratives; one that was also more generally reflected in narrative projection and reception. The pronounced and prominent creation of this movement narrative and its application to the sensemaking of 9/11 spoke directly to the sovereignty and integrity of Germany as a unified nation. The transition predicted a movement from Germany's adolescence to Germany's adulthood as a fully sovereign and mature nation. This chapter will also examine the substantial consequences for the conduct of German foreign policy, namely increased assertiveness and self-confidence around the placement of interests

in the international arena.

## 5.2. Context and Actors: A Unified Germany in a Post-Cold War World

German unification in 1990 posed considerable domestic challenges to German policymakers. It had been a political fantasy for decades and was attached to expectations by international partners and the two estranged populations alike. Two competing visions of Germany's future circulated in academic literature: Germany as *Gulliver* and Germany as *Ulysses* (see Hellmann 1997). The perception of Germany as *Gulliver* implied the fear that Germany would once again become too strong a power to handle. The *Ulysses* narrative foresaw instead that 'the Germans themselves were ... most keenly aware of the sirens of power' (Hellmann 1997, p. 30). As a result, Germany was to impose and take a self-restraining approach, deeply embedded in multilateral structures. The two competing visions for Germany set the tone for discussions around Germany's foreign policy.

Further, the end of the Cold War had ushered the international arena into an era of uncertain power dynamics. As the bipolar world order had seemingly come to an end, it 'had imparted a powerful sense of shared transatlantic security identity, symbolised by NATO' (Dyson 2008, p. 41). The end of the Cold War also meant that security identity commitments shared with the US and through the transatlantic alliance were now questioned by policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic. Together with the security strategy revisions by the US administrations under Bill Clinton and later George W. Bush, the 'US and European actors had to come to terms with the realisation they had overlapping, but frequently different interests and perspectives and that divergences were growing' (Ibid.). This posed crucial questions to Germany's ontological status and the structures within which former West Germany had traditionally evaluated and sought its security identity commitments.

Domestically, unification posed severe economic and administrative challenges and had enormous implications for discussions on German identity narratives (see Bach 1999; Banchoff 1999; Katzenstein 1997). The two estranged Germanys had been subject to militarised and ideological confrontation, despite the ongoing political commitment to unification in the West. As Jonas Hagmann (2015, p. 167) argues:

Starting in 1989, countless debates were held in the old (West German) and the new (unified) Bundestag on all kinds of aspects of German unification; hundreds of declarations were made emphasising the historical meaning of the event; and emotional controversies were aired with a view to settling the question of which political party could be credited for the end of

Germany's partition ... Given this focus, German debates on international security were almost non-existent in the immediate post-Cold War years.

According to Andreas Maurer (2000, p. 43), eight years after unification Germany was at a crossroads. When Chancellor Schröder's government, composed of the SPD and the Green Party, was voted into power in 1998, it had been 'voted in by the people to ostensibly tackle domestic political concerns' (Miskimmon 2004, p. 208).<sup>10</sup> The new coalition promised a new era of politics, a new generation of politicians and a new political approach to Germany's future. The move of parliament from Bonn to Berlin symbolised the new age of German politics (Zimmermann 2002, pp. 255-256). Whereas Bonn had 'come to present the Westernization of the Federal Republic' (Jarausch 1997, p. 20) the move to the formerly divided and thus historically significant Berlin symbolised a fresh start for the newly unified country.

On Chancellor Schröder's inauguration address, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)* (1998, p. 43) commented: 'it is remarkable how the governmental address associated the old Republic with childhood, criticism and crisis, yet the new Republic with a commitment to adulthood and partnership'. This observation is worth taking note of, as it was a key narrative that Chancellor Gerhard Schröder would use in the sensemaking of and response to 9/11.

In the election campaign of 1998, the SPD sought to represent the party of the people, aiming to appeal to left and right voters alike. Because of the centrist approach, Schröder was 'frequently cited with UK prime minister Tony Blair as representative of a new centrist politics in western Europe' (East and Thomas 2003, p. 192). While appealing to a European centrist politics, the SPD's election campaign also borrowed elements of US election campaigns, with a strong focus on strategic communication and the efficient use of media (Ristau 2000, p. 469).

A lawyer by profession and from a working-class background, Gerhard Schröder quickly developed an appetite for a career in politics (Boberg, Hase and Johnson 2016, p. 227). Roger East and Richard Thomas (2003, p.192) describe Schröder as '[a]mbitious, designer-suited and business-friendly' who possessed a 'stellar talent of selling himself' (Hogrefe et al. 1999, translated by author). These characteristic traits translated into a powerful means to convince people of, and with, his charisma (Prantl 1998). Schröder was a 'political animal' (Eppler in Graw 1998, p. 9), with an inclination to draw on power-political

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<sup>10</sup> In the German party system, the colour red is associated with the SPD, the colour green with the Green Party, the colour black with the CDU/CSU fraction, yellow with the Liberal Democrats, FDP. This thesis occasionally refers to the SPD/Green Party coalition as Red/Green coalition of government

resources and a strong focus on strategic, political and institutional leadership by and with an empowered Chancellor's Office.

Karl-Rudolf Korte (2001, translated by author) referred to Schröder as a Chancellor of 'multiple options'. On the one hand, Chancellor Schröder was able to control governance and strategic outlook through an empowered and dominant Chancellor's Office. The powerful position of the Chancellor's Office also meant that Schröder attempted to become the centre of political power and focus of political attention (Kaspari 2008). On the other hand, because his leadership strategy focused on personalisation and dominance of the Chancellor's Office, it also gave less space to the discussion and development of long-term political themes during his Chancellorship as traditionally developed by the respective ministers through the *Ressortprinzip*. The strong focus on his personality also made him susceptible to public opinion and emerging events because the focus rested on Schröder rather than a shared and equally empowered Cabinet. Apart from Foreign Minister Joseph "Joschka" Martin Fischer, Cabinet members and ministers were thus less able to place themselves in the public discussion and to shape it effectively. It follows that his reactive governance made for an ambivalent and potentially risky strategy, but above all, a public Chancellorship.

The appointment of Joschka Fischer as Germany's Foreign Minister further propelled the progressiveness of the newly elected government. Fischer, born in 1948, was brought up Catholic and quit high school in 1966. During the German Autumn, Fischer was on the front lines of the student movement. Disenfranchised with the student movement's increasing violence, he sought to readjust his thinking around Germany's New Left and his political activism (Berman 2007, p. 96).

He became involved in the newly founded Green Party and served as Environment Minister in Hesse from 1991 to 1994. After, he became co-chairman of the Green Party's parliamentary faction in the *Bundestag*. Fischer benefited from charisma and rhetorical skill both of which had propelled him to lead most of the opinion polls for large parts of the 1990s. Indeed, 'Joschka Fischer's popularity had been virtually unassailable' (Hawley 2005). Crucially, the coalition government's commitment to a 'foreign policy of peace' (SPD and Bündnis 90/Die GRÜNEN 1998, p. 41, translated by author) carried Fischer's handwriting. Fischer's foreign political approach linked to the dominant focus of the Red/Green coalition government on seeking to fulfil the promise of a progressive, modern and fully sovereign Germany. However, despite the coalition treaty's commitment to Germany's 'foreign policy being a policy for peace' (Ibid.) and despite the Green Party's foundations in the anti-war movement, the coalition was unexpectedly confronted with the war in Kosovo in 1999.

The war in Kosovo and questions over the terms of German engagement caused considerable confusion for the early days of the Berlin Republic: ‘But the heated domestic debate over the relative primacy of the historical lessons – “never again war” versus “never again genocide” – indicated the confusion over what was to be authentic and, hence, appropriate practices for German foreign policy’ (Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, p. 440). It appeared that the participation in Kosovo proved to be a moment at which Germany normalised a military-focused foreign policy, thereby abandoning its civilian power narrative (see Maull 2000). If anything, the participation in Kosovo further posed a moral dilemma for the pacifist Joschka Fischer (Miskimmon 2009). Volker Heins (2002) has also argued, however, that the engagement in Kosovo still rested decisively on making sense of military engagement through historical narratives, rather than a moment at which actors sought to narrate movement away from these narratives, as was the case for the sensemaking of 9/11. The Green Party had grown as an anti-war, anti-establishment and anti-capitalist movement and a robust anti-military stance had been core to its party identity. Part of the SPD, too, had a pacifist tradition and had remained critical of the US (see Kaim 2003, p. 129) both of which played a role in narrating Kosovo and 9/11.

During Kosovo, Fischer sought to resolve the dilemma by relating the politics for peace to the ‘constitutionally mandated German goals of promoting world peace and situate it in a policy narrative emphasising Germany’s historical responsibility’ (Dyson 2008, p. 39). It was thus particularly Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, who justified the intervention in Kosovo with a historically reasoned “never again Auschwitz” narrative (see Schwab-Trapp 2002, p. 184, translated by author). The narrative of “never again Auschwitz” also ‘created a new opportunity for domestic policy leadership from within the “peace” coalition’ (Dyson 2008, p. 39). The new opportunity was also facilitated by the fact that the politics of US interventionism advanced by Bill Clinton was easier to incorporate into the civilian power narrative than the US interventionism advocated by George W. Bush: ‘Clinton was a multilateralist by conviction, and humanitarian ends if protecting civilian populations and opposing ethnic cleansing seemed to play an important role in his attitude to crisis intervention’ (Ibid, p. 38).

Notwithstanding efforts of Foreign Minister Fischer to emphasise the continuity and credibility of Germany’s civilian power narrative, the participation in Kosovo ‘posed a serious threat to Germany’s ontological security’ (Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, p. 440) because it questioned the security identity commitment that had guided West Germany’s foreign policy. While ‘[t]here was no immediate attempt to define a radical “misfit” between

[the] international security developments and domestic conceptions of defence and security' (Dyson 2008, p. 39), the threat to ontological security rested on the symbolic implications of the active participation in military conflict. The threat to ontological security thus came from the fact that Kosovo contributed to the debate on the future of Germany's security identity and military identity, which was crucially linked to Germany's post-WWII identity commitments.

The uncertainties of a post-Cold War international order, German unification and questions to Germany's security and identity commitments put Germany's ontological security in uncharted waters and on uncertain grounds. However, the events of 9/11 would confront Germany with yet another and even more fundamental question for its security identity and identity narratives more broadly: 'From today's perspective, 9/11 more than the war in Kosovo seems to have repealed Germany's military "Sonderrolle"' (Nachtigall 2012, p. 418, translated by author). Indeed, 9/11 was narrated as the moment at which Germany had grown into a mature nation that could decide based on interest when to engage and when to abstain militarily. The narrative sensemaking of 9/11 suggested that German maturity had lifted some post-war interdependencies and was finally able and trusted to partake in international politics.

### 5.3. Narrative Formation

Chancellor Schröder learnt of the events in New York and Washington, D.C. around 3 p.m. CET. Chancellor Schröder's first call was to Foreign Minister Fischer (Hockenos 2008, p. 189). Two hours later, the Federal Security Council (the highest security council in Germany) met to discuss the attacks. The Federal Security Council was comprised, among others, of Chancellor Schröder, Foreign Minister Fischer, Interior Minister Otto Schily (SPD) and Defence Minister Rudolph Scharping (SPD). All of these actors took on prominent roles in shaping the narrative formation process; however, Schröder and Fischer remained dominant actors, especially in narrative projection and reception.

As will be discussed, the sensemaking of 9/11 and German identity narratives was facilitated by a narrative of German maturity. Initially, the maturity narrative served to react to and negotiate the reading of international expectations by Germany's partners, in particular by the US. Expressions of solidarity and support came from all around the world, with the notable exception of Iraq. However, immediately after 9/11, there was also a discernible strategic moment to the narration of the attacks and 'from the onset, the declarations of

solidarity were inherently characterised by a rational moment' (Schuster 2011, p. 233, translated by author).

The specificity of the German maturity narrative was one that reasoned for the historical status of adolescence post-WWII. As will be shown, 9/11 was narrated as the end of this process, which incorporated the narration of an increase in international responsibility. The increase of responsibility included the acceptance and acknowledgement of Germany's responsibility in the world, particularly military engagement, where and when it served Germany's interest. 9/11 was thus recognised and narrated as a chance to finalise the process of Western integration at a moment at which Germany was now able to be a fully sovereign member.

In the process of settling the *Sonderrolle* status of the German state, the maturity narrative further helped to narrate and make sense of German national interest.<sup>11</sup> Chancellor Schröder's particular focus fostered an understanding of 9/11 as the moment at which Germany had to decide upon its future and its viability as a fully sovereign Western nation: 'In the decision, we will make, we are guided by one objective only: to protect the viability of our country in the future in a free world' (Schröder 2001, 14/187, p. 18302, translated by author).

### 5.3.1. Solidarity Paid is a Solidarity Not Owed: The Strategic Narration of Expectations

Shortly after meeting with the Federal Security Council, Chancellor Schröder appeared on TV with Foreign Minister Fischer beside him, declaring Germany's 'unwavering solidarity' with the US (see 2001, 14/187, p. 18293, translated by author). Chancellor Schröder (Ibid., 14/203, p. 19875) continuously reminded international and domestic audiences of the 'expectations directed toward us by our partners' and the duty of solidarity.

Foreign Minister Fischer (2001, 14/192, p. 18693, translated by author) further declared 'all-encompassing solidarity' as 'self-evident'. He was supported by Green Party member Ludger Volmer (2001, 14/187, p. 18321, translated by author) who argued that 'we as allies of the partner under attack do not only have the moral right, but the moral and political duty to contribute our share to the defence against the attackers'. Similarly, then Defence Minister Rudolph Scharping (2001, 14/187, p. 18325, translated by author) stated: 'A contribution [to the safeguarding of peace, freedom and democracy] is expected of us'.

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<sup>11</sup> *Sonderrolle* can be translated as a special path, special status or special role. In the context of Germany, the term is mostly mentioned in the context of the policy of military restraint post-1945.

In making sense of the expected solidarity, German policymakers narrated the solidarity through a historically evidenced duty. These narratives made 9/11 the moment at which Germany was ready to repay the solidarity that the US had extended to Germany post-WWII. For Chancellor Schröder (2001, 14/187, p. 18301, translated by author):

It was the Americans that have decisively contributed to the victory over the Nazis, and it was our American friends that made possible new beginnings in liberty and democracy. They have not only guaranteed and protected life in but the liberty of West Berlin. They helped us regain our state's unity and integrity in a peaceful, democratic Europe.

A cross-parliamentary construction of the historical necessity of alliance duty underlined its significance. For example, then opposition leader Friedrich Merz (CDU) (2001, 14/187, p. 18305, translated by author) said: 'We Germans have the duty within NATO to repay a part of the solidarity we have experienced in the past 50 years, in particular from the Americans'. Guido Westerwelle (FDP) (2001, 14/187, p. 18310, translated by author) stated:

We would not be here; we would not be able to speak here. Germany did not overcome the tyranny on its own accord, but with America and their allies' help. [I say this] not as an empty phrase but to express the responsibility that we now have.

Rarely a speech was given in the autumn of 2001 that did not refer to the historical role of the US in the fight against Nazism, the establishment of democracy or the US support in the unification process. The narration of alliance duty served two dominant strategic functions.

It was first a means to stabilise the state's ontological security around 9/11. 9/11 had constituted and was narrated as a rupture (see section 5.3.2.) and thus destabilised the sense of *Self* and the sense of security. Reading and reacting to expectations functioned in part as a constitutive process of re-establishing knowledge of the *Self* and further provided a sense of security by fulfilling these expectations. Notwithstanding Germany policymakers' later shift from the transatlantic partnership, the immediate aftermath of 9/11 linked the sense of *Self* to the transatlantic relationship and emphasised the importance of the transatlantic partnership for the ontological security of the *Self*. In particular, the opposition, most dominantly Wolfgang Schäuble, Angela Merkel and Friedrich Merz (all CDU) saw German ontological and material security as provided by and maintained through the transatlantic alliance. The theme of transatlantic security would also recur when the Schröder government shifted the focus away from and sought to renegotiate the parameters of the transatlantic alliance (see section 5.3.3.).

Second, the narration of alliance duty was a means to foster an understanding of leaving Germany's *Sonderrolle* status behind and to narratively re-position a mature Germany in the international order. Where the end of the Cold War had called into question the

convergence of interests between the US and Europe, the narration of maturity sought to make sense of these structural uncertainties. It is thus essential to recognise the moment at which this historical narrative emerged. Where Germany had been given a “new life” as a democratic state with the help of the US post-WWII, Chancellor Schröder emphasised that it was now the moment at which Germany had to repay this solidarity. The sensemaking of 9/11 thus served to strategically place Germany’s interest in the possible space of identity narrative negotiation. Ulrich Schuster (2011, p. 240, translated by author) argues that ‘the historical reproduction served as a substantive ... moment of assuming power. It was understood that with the United States by its side, Germany was able not only to fight international terrorism but achieve potentially bigger things’. As Schröder (2001, 14/187, pp. 18303-18304, translated by author, italics added) declared:

*At the beginning of this century, Germany is on the right side – almost tempted to say, finally – on the side of inviolable human rights. These human rights are our great achievement and the legacy of European enlightenment. These values of human rights, liberal democracy and tolerance are our great strength in the fight against terrorism.*

The responsibility to pay solidarity was thus not merely “the right thing to do”. It was also a means to “rectify” Germany’s past position and to move on. The evocation of historically evidenced alliance duty thus constituted an attempt to assume strategic interest and power and to negotiate the questions posed by an uncertain international order and Germany’s role within it.

### 5.3.2. 9/11 as Rupture: The End of Ambiguity and the Construction of a New International Order

In the construction and sensemaking of violent terrorist attacks, the notion of arbitrary and expected violence is particularly important to ‘foster the post-hoc socio-political construction of a violent event as an act of terrorism’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 571). For the sensemaking of 9/11, the narration of the unexpected nature of the events further helped to outline and clarify the extent of rupture, which fundamentally shaped setting ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid., p. 561) around the events of 9/11. Whether or not affect played a crucial role in the perceived change of political reality does not mitigate the need to examine how the “before and after” was strategically constructed and to which end, especially for practices of ‘discursive anchor[ing]’ (Ibid.). The ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) that political actors constructed, further linked the redescription of Germany’s role to the re-narrated threat landscape and the narrative construction of Germany’s ‘purview of ... agency’ (Steele 2008a, p. 73).

To align with Germany's aspirations to take an active part in restructuring the international order, actors sought to specify said rupture and link it to proposals and visions of the new international order. Further, for new 'discursive anchors' to be set, 9/11 had to be narrated as something "new" because otherwise they would have likely manifested previously set 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) instead. Irrespective of how "new" 9/11 was, this chapter is interested in how the narrative construction of "newness" strategically linked to the narration of identity commitments as well as processes of constructing new 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.)

Of course, the Schleyer kidnapping and 9/11 are very different events. However, German 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.) of terrorism were deeply rooted in understanding terrorism from the Left and the reaction of a strong, non-negotiating state. 9/11 had to be made sense of by setting new 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.), where previous anchors were unable to provide sufficient meaning for and of the events. In the process of setting new anchors, political actors narrated the threat landscape that international terrorism posed as the "new reality" of international security. At the same time, especially where the bellicose rhetoric of the Bush rhetoric contradicted Germany's identity narrative commitments, 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.) focused on the threat posed to civilisation. They were further set in recognition of Germany's self-narrated role as an international peacekeeping power.

Further, in writing temporal claims of rupture, German policymakers narrated the decisions that had to be made now as fundamental to designing the future. Precisely because political actors narrated the decisions as a choice over the viability and direction of Germany's and the world's respective futures, they saw a stake in shaping their direction. Whereas political actors across parliament narrated 9/11 as a rupture, the function of narrating rupture in the design of possible futures differed profoundly between actors, even within the government.

For Chancellor Schröder (2002, 15/4, p. 57, translated by author), it was clear that 9/11 had 'changed security in the world dramatically'. Schröder argued that new parameters had to be forged that validated the drastic changes emanating from 9/11. The world needed a 'more just distribution of advantages of globalisation', a 'balance of interests' and a 'strengthened monopoly of violence in strong, legitimate international organisations, above all the United Nations' (Ibid, p. 58). For example, Schröder (2004, 15/100, p. 8912, translated by author, italics added) stated:

No country in this world can manage the challenges on its own. We need a robust multilateral system; we need the United Nations. The United Nations, is, however, *in need of reform* to solve the challenges ahead of us. ... above all, I talk about *reforming the Security*

*Council. ... It can only live up to its role if it is constituted more representatively than today. It is for this reason Germany actively participates and advocates for a reform to extend the Security Council. ... Germany is ready to take on responsibility as a permanent member.*

Chancellor Schröder's use of the system narrative of a multilateral world order served to employ Germany's strategic interests with a reformulation of international order. Schröder, in particular, fostered Germany's role as a responsible and rational actor within this multilateral system. As such, the characteristics attached to this political model mirrored the issue narrative of the UN Security Council's reform (see section 5.3.3.). In this identity narrative negotiation, German political actors advocated for a more active role. Schröder (2001, 14/192, p. 18682, translated by author) further spoke of the 'positioning of Germany in the future' through which Germany had to 'recognise and take on responsibility in a new way'.

He specified: 'In its international responsibility, the Federal government, is standing up for a globalisation of markets that is accompanied by the globalisation of human rights and social security' (Ibid.). Further, 'our political generation is standing in front of the historical task, to define justice in times of globalisation and organise it politically' (Ibid.). Schröder narrated 9/11 as the signifying event, the announcement of a new moment at which the process of globalisation could and had to be re-negotiated because the threat landscape was a different one after 9/11 and because Germany's role had changed with 9/11. The narratives thus created a causal plot that sought to enable identity narrative negotiation. In this way, 9/11 served to negotiate the uncertainties around the end of the Cold War more generally and allowed policymakers to place movement narratives within the structural changes that conditioned Germany's re-evaluation of its position in the world. At the same time, it was a response to 9/11 and a means to make sense of an event that had struck the international community and had affected people around the globe.

Foreign Minister Fischer, in particular, linked the "new" world order to a re-description of the functioning logic of the international system, including the role of the US within it. He stated:

One lesson we will have to learn from September 11, 2001, is that the US must not be pushed back into unilateralism. If we do not understand, if we ignore that the US, together with Europe, has a chance to solve conflicts, we also fail to see that politics for peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> century means first and foremost a politics of multilateral responsibility. We must never again allow for a withdrawal of the wealthy parts of the world – when faced with a decision to engage militarily or not it is already often too late – that instead, we need to tackle solving the problems in the third world, in particular in Asia and Africa in the framework of a preventative politics of peace. I emphasise: preventatively, not militarily – the wealthy nations need to do that together.

(Fischer 2001, 14/189, p. 19296, translated by author)

His redescriptive movement narrative sought to establish a multilateral process that ensured conflict prevention and equity; a system that decidedly did not rest on US unilateralism. Fischer had engaged these narratives around Kosovo, but they were now defined in terms that foresaw more active shaping power of Germany's role in the multilateral order and Germany's military engagement.

The redescription of the international order and Germany's role within it also reflected and incorporated a more general suspicion among the German public of the US hegemonic assumptions. These assumptions appeared to be confirmed by the Bush administration as later inscribed into the National Security Doctrine of 2002 and 'the German public opinion was overwhelmingly anxious about the new US security doctrine of pre-emptive strike' (Dyson 2008, p. 40). The anxiety among the German public also reflected an increasing Anti-Americanism, especially as discussions around the Iraq War emerged. While in the summer of 2002, 61% of the German population had a favourable view of the US, it was only 23% by spring 2003 (Kaim 2003, p. 139).

The unfavourable view of the US and the fear of war also meant that Chancellor Schröder had to sell Afghanistan to a critical public. The self-narrated role of international responsibility was a means to portray Afghanistan as a consequence of this role and to portray the engagement in Afghanistan as repayment of solidarity. Shortly after Germany supported invoking NATO Article 5 and the US-led mission in Afghanistan, Schröder (2001, 14/192, p. 18682, translated by author) argued for his position in a particularly exemplary manner:

There are many reasons why Germany needs to show a presence and active solidarity with our friends in the United States and the international alliance against terrorism: historical reasons and current reasons, but also reasons that have to do with the positioning of Germany in the future. After the end of the Cold War, the unification of Germany and the restoration of our full sovereignty, we are facing an international responsibility in a new way. This responsibility reflects our role as a significant European and transatlantic partner, but also as a stable democracy and strong economy in the heart of Europe. Ten years ago, no one would have expected that Germany would have to do more of the secondary support and the provisioning of infrastructure or financial contributions toward securing freedom, justice and stability. I am saying this also in light of my thinking and actions then. This phase of post-war German politics, however – and I have reflected on this immediately after September 11 – is irrevocably over.

However, more so than Schröder, Foreign Minister Fischer pushed for a redescription of the multilateral world order, one in which access to globalisation constituted a core theme in the objective to overcome international terrorism. Equitable globalisation and multilateralism were thus narrated as one. For a fairer international order, Fischer (2004, 15/112, p. 10202, translated by author, italics added) advocated a strengthened European role in the "rebuilding" process after 9/11:

I am convinced that a pre-condition for success is that we Europeans, together with our US American partners, are finally *starting a discussion* that has to have at heart a realistic attitude. On this basis, we will try to *create a new consensus* ... *A new consensus is necessary* because neither Europe nor the United States – the last remaining superpower – will be able to manage the immense challenges that are not only based on a common threat.

The transitioning process toward a new international order that Fischer (Ibid., pp. 10201-10202) narrated ‘made a redefinition of roles necessary, in particular, the meaning of the transatlantic alliance with implied consequences for the responsibility of Europe’. Further, ‘the whole weight of our country must be put behind the creation of a common European foreign policy. Otherwise, we are threatened by the marginalisation of Europe in the new world order’ (Fischer 2001, 14/192, p. 18695, translated by author). Where Foreign Minister Fischer narrated a changing significance and foreign-political orientation toward the creation of a European Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), it also implied the renegotiation of the transatlantic partnership. It further implied the narration of the future of the international order and internationally equitable access to the advantages of globalisation (see Fischer 2001, 14/187, p. 18395; 2002, 15/13, p. 921; 2005). Fischer (2005, translated by author) advocated for a ‘Renewal of the West’ after 9/11 as an essential part of shaping Germany’s and the international future. In this way, he not only suggested a reformulation of the mechanisms of the international order but strategically re-narrated the process of globalisation itself, and thereby the values that underpinned it.

Fischer’s narrative tied closely to an understanding of Germany’s new role. An international system governed by multilateral institutions with a focus on conflict resolution and prevention was more conducive to the self-narrated role that German political actors sought for Germany to play in the world. It was understood that a system where power was understood not by military means but by the success of providing equitable shares in the globalisation process and conflict prevention would elevate Germany’s position in this system. Rupture here meant the chance for renewal; a renewal on which Joschka Fischer and Gerhard Schröder placed great emphasis and hopes.

Thus, alongside the expressions of solidarity with the US, German political actors voiced their expectations and aspirations early on: ‘With any right, we know that, corresponds a duty, yet following this logic it is also important to acknowledge that with any alliance duty we have taken on, corresponds a right, and this right is access to information and consultation’ (Schröder 2001, 14/187, p. 18302, translated by author). As Schuster (2011, p. 234, translated by author) argues: ‘From the beginning, the official pro-US position ... linked the desire to secure a right to a voice in the measures that were now anticipated to be taken by the US’. Furthermore, German actors expressed the desire to have a voice in the restructuring

process of the international order and the possible implications of 9/11 for the set-up of multilateral governance.

### 5.3.3. Rupture and the Restoration of Transatlantic Identity Commitments

The opposition made sense of rupture differently. To be sure, the opposition shared the desire for Germany to become a more valuable partner and powerful international actor. Further still, the opposition agreed on the significance of 9/11 as a moment of rupture that would lay the groundwork for the future. Angela Merkel (2001, 14/187, p. 18326, translated by author) argued only a week after the attacks that Germany had to see the crisis as a ‘chance’ to change ‘the global architecture’ according to democratic principles and free markets. CDU/CSU faction leader Friedrich Merz (2001, 14/187, p. 18306, translated by author) understood 9/11 as the ‘end of all ambiguity’. Further, he argued that Germany and international partners stood ‘in front of a historic challenge. Freedom must be defended again’ (Ibid.). Angela Merkel (2001, 14/187, p. 18326, translated by author) argued similarly that ‘the threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have been revealed ... We have no more illusions about the dangers of our century. No one can say that they have not seen the reality of these threats. All warnings have exceeded reality’. Further, she stated: ‘it is true that what happened on September 11, 2001, was a declaration of war against the civilised world. September 11 was a rupture’ (Ibid.). However, for the opposition, mending this rupture required recommitment to the transatlantic partnership:

The traditional pillars of our foreign and security policy have to remain intact: European and transatlantic unity. In light of Germany’s unification and restoration of sovereignty, our generation has to re-establish, re-formulate, and discuss ... particularly with the people of this country – these pillars once again.

(Merkel 2003, 15/37, p. 3003, translated by author)

Merkel placed narrative movement in the confines of what was structurally available. Movement, as placed here, tied to the restoration of order, rather than its redescription. Angela Merkel exemplified a trend within the CDU/CSU. Where the government shifted system narratives and designed new roles, political actors from the CDU/CSU invested more vigorously in restoring the traditional roles and structures of the transatlantic partnership. The significance of 9/11 as an epochal change, lay not in its end of an era but its significance for the establishment of Germany’s future in relation to the world. As Merz (2001, 14/187, p. 18305, translated by author) urged the government and his fellow party members: ‘We can and must lay the groundwork for the Atlantic alliance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century’.

Further, Merz (Ibid.) narrated this moment as a moment of truth: ‘Our behaviour, the way we act as and specifically because we are Germans within the next few weeks and months ... will determine the relationship between Germany and America for decades’. In the narration of rupture lay the significance for writing the future, in close alignment with the identity narratives that political actors wanted to pursue. Wolfgang Gerhardt (FDP) (2001, 14/187, p. 18323, translated by author) stated that it was now ‘on us, more so than we would have thought and maybe more than we would have liked or believed we were capable of’.

Guido Westerwelle (FDP) (2001, 14/198, p. 19292, translated by author) shared this view, in saying that in the case of 9/11 ‘the term “rupture”, maybe “historical rupture” applies to our foreign and security policies’. It was for this reason that ‘anyone – be it government or opposition – needs to be aware of and acknowledge the specific responsibilities of the next hours and weeks’ (Ibid.). In corroboration of the CDU/CSU reading of 9/11, he added that ‘after Germany’s foreign and security policies will have changed ... there can be no more grounds for neutrality’ (Ibid.). The particular construction of rupture helped to promote policies that different actors had long sought to enact.

The policy timing around 9/11 (Riedl 2015) begs the question of how to assess the difference in instrumentalising identity narratives for policy purposes and narrations of change to identity narratives. Further still, this leaves the interaction of different short-term narrations of 9/11 with long-term narratives so far unanswered. In responding to these questions, it is crucial to note that the instrumentalisation of an event for the realisation of long-term political objectives does not mutually exclude the negotiation of identity narratives. In the collective political narration, the significance of the seismic turning point of 9/11 was not based on what was left behind or which opportunities now arose for the realisation of power political objectives. The significance of 9/11 rested on its characterisation as a moment at which political actors had to decide on Germany’s future role in the world and the new shape of the international order. 9/11 hence became the moment at which actors were able to forge, enact and lay the groundwork for competing visions of this future. In this process, political actors across parliament wanted Germany to take part in laying the foundations of an international order in which Germany could take up the role it had narrated for itself around the events of 9/11.

With 9/11 as a moment at which these values had to be unanimously defended, German political actors across the political spectrum substantiated the scope of responsibility of German engagement. The appeal was to safeguard values; values that did not necessarily apply in the “War on Terror”, which strategically outlined limits to possible German

involvement. 9/11 was thus stipulated as the moment at which no more ambiguity about values and the world order was possible so as to prevent future realisations of the danger inherent to the new threat landscape. 9/11 was specified as the end of ambiguity; as a ‘healing disillusionment’ (see Nachtigall 2012, p. 150, translated by author). The “waking up” to the harsh reality of global risks further tied a re-narrated threat landscape to ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around 9/11 as will be explored in the subsequent section.

#### 5.3.4. The Narration of Rupture, Insecurity and the “New” Threat Landscape

In addition to aiming to re-narrate the functioning international order, the significance of rupture in the narrative construction of 9/11 relied on its tie to a narration of the “new” threat landscape that emerged from 9/11. The link was also a decisive element in constructing new ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) around 9/11 as a violent terrorist event. Setting ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) around 9/11 further required an understanding of the threat that was not tied to the US reading of the “War on Terror” because active participation in the “War on Terror” did not match with the self-narrated role as an international peacekeeping force. Schröder (2001, 14/186, pp. 18293-18294, translated by author) soon began to characterise the attacks as attacks against civilisation – 9 days before the civilisation theme emerged in the construction of George W. Bush’s narratives:

Yesterday’s attacks in New York and Washington were not only an attack against the United States of America; they were a declaration of war against the entire civilised world. This kind of terrorist violence, the random extinction of innocent life questions the basic rules of our civilisation. It threatens the principles of human life in freedom and security directly, all that we have been building for generations ... Together we will not have these values destroyed, be it in America, in Europe, or elsewhere.

In other words, the construction of the attacks as attacks against civilisation complimented the self-perception of an ‘ordering power with an ambition to participate in shaping the international order’ (Schuster 2011, p. 240, translated by author). As Schuster (Ibid.) further outlines: ‘politicians saw a sign for a radically changing international order. Against this backdrop, German parliamentarians recognised a chance – in an erring consensus – to expand German foreign political influence’. In writing the threat landscape as a threat against the values that ‘held the world at its core’ (Schröder 2001, 14/186, p. 18293, translated by author) the government, in particular, pursued a specification of the nature of attacks that matched with its aspirations for Germany’s role in the world within a redescribed international system.

Schröder (2001, p. 18301, translated by author) argued that the new threat landscape

had stipulated a ‘fight for the culture of an ever-increasingly connected world’, while the ‘faceless and ahistorical, barbaric terror is directed against all that holds the world together at its core’. Minister of the Interior, Otto Schily (2002, 15/04, p. 138, translated by author) also stated that the ‘extent of the threat has taken up a scale that poses unprecedented problems. The extent of this threat equally describes the scale of our common responsibility’. Likewise, Fischer (2002, 15/04, p. 94, translated by author) claimed that ‘since September 11 ... we are confronted by a new strategic threat to our security, namely international terrorism ... [and] the new totalitarianism, ... the Islamist terrorism advocated by Osama Bin Laden’. Fischer (2003, 15/48, p. 3974, translated by author) argued further that ‘the new threats ... threaten us all and require a new security strategy’. Schily (2004, 15/89, p. 7881, translated by author) corroborated this narration of rupture:

I think we all agree that we are facing new threats that have exceeded the known dimensions from the past. Since September 11, 2001, the world looks different from what it looked like before. We need to adjust to these new threats and must not relinquish vigilance.

The construction of temporal claims was particularly instructive: since policymakers narrated 9/11 to have changed the world and since the international community was understood as having to face a new dimension of threat, it appeared consequential that actors sought to forge new ways of thinking about the international order and security challenges. The collective rendering of terrorism as new was endorsed not only by governmental political actors, but similarly by most members of the opposition parties such as the CDU/CSU and FDP. For example, Friedrich Pflüger (2002, 15/08, p. 381, translated by author) then Deputy Chair of the CDU/CSU faction in the *Bundestag* considered international terrorism to be ‘a third totalitarian movement that is different to the other ones’. The Left, although less vocal, did not profoundly contradict the reading of the attacks as directed against civilisation nor did it necessarily disagree with the construction of “newness”. However, whereas political actors widely supported the characterisation of the attacks as attacks against civilisation, considerable differences existed, and soon began to emerge more drastically, over the definition of values and the scope of means. The government used the reading of 9/11 as an attack against civilisation to reject active involvement in and support for the US “War on Terror”. The differences among actors were most visible in questions over the enactment of identity narratives around the engagement in Afghanistan, but even more drastically, the rejection of the Iraq War.

In rejecting the “War on Terror” narrative, Schröder (2001, 14/187, p. 18302, translated by author) clarified that while Germany supported its ally, it would not take part in ‘adventures’. From early on, the Schröder government thus foresaw a potential dissonance

with the US in the reading of 9/11, despite the initial assurances of solidarity. Constructing the global threat landscape after 9/11 and international terrorism thus took narrative effort on the part of the political actors involved. As Haggmann (2015, p. 178) argues:

German policymakers' consequent collectivisation of insecurity to Europe and the "world" strikes as particularly impressive. It is based on this distinct construction process ... that collaborative security strategies could be pursued by Germany since they put the home nation in a position to other states ... [This] practice of subject-positioning is particularly instructive.

The creation of the global threat landscape placed the 'boundaries of terrorism at the (front) line of the Western societal order' (Baban 2013, p. 144, translated by author). These boundaries 'signified that through symbolically coding the events' (Ibid.) as an attack against civilisation, political actors sought to provide the 'epistemological basis' (Haggmann 2015, p. 174) not only for German identity narratives but also for new 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around terrorist violence.

9/11 as an unprecedented realisation of the "new" threat landscape meant that the threat landscape endangered all of humanity; specifically, however, those civilised nations that wanted to protect the Western value system. The 'construction of common insecurity' (Haggmann 2015, p. 175) through the narration of the attacks as directed against civilisation at large, thus provided a specific epistemological framework. Based on this framework, the government, in particular, sought to justify and reason for engagement in Afghanistan.

Shortly after 9/11 and Chancellor Schröder's widely supported declaration of unwavering solidarity, the German government supported NATO's invocation of Article 5 and, by extension, the reading of the terrorist attacks as a case for collective defence. Germany also supported Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in November 2001. OEF was the military mission deployed by the US with the objective to 'destroy the al-Qaeda network inside Afghanistan along with the illegitimate Taliban regime' as it was understood to '[harbour] and [protect] the terrorists' (Bush in Hodes and Sedra 2007, p. 43) in particular Al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden. Germany further supported the International Security Assistance Force for Afghanistan (ISAF) in December 2001. ISAF was first deployed on the basis of a UN Security Council mandate and 'on the basis of a request for assistance by the Afghan authorities' (NATO 2015). The command was taken over by NATO in August 2003.

Where the maturity narrative had been used to engage the idea of potential military engagement, its enactment needed additional support. At the same time, the participation in Afghanistan served to emphasise the maturity narrative and gave it credibility. As Brent Steele (2010, p. 3) states: 'Because state agents "narrate" about the nation-state, they create

potential Selves that that nation-state seeks to realize through its policies’. The tension created by Afghanistan’s challenge to the civilian power narrative rested decisively on the movement narrative of maturity as a means to negotiate the insecurity created by this tension. Likewise, Fischer (2002, 15/09, p. 532, translated by author) argued that ‘Germany takes part in the global anti-terror coalition. It assumes its responsibilities in international solidarity, and in its interest, because international terrorism threatens us very directly’. Then Defence Minister Peter Struck (2002, 15/08, p. 379, translated by author) mirrored Fischer’s perspective, saying that:

Even if German territory has thus far been spared from attacks, the threat is real for us. International terrorism also concerns our country, our way of life and the fundament on which our political culture is resting. Thus, we continue our military deployments to Afghanistan.

In assuming responsibility and acknowledging Germany’s strategic interest in Afghanistan, governing political actors sought to drive and substantiate the maturity narrative. Further, the pronouncement of interest also helped move beyond the alliance duty explanation for engaging in Afghanistan and indeed, negotiate the commitments inherent to the solidarity Schröder had narrated shortly after 9/11. Schröder and Fischer’s specification of the type of international order that they envisioned and the underlying normative rules ‘foreshadowed that an emphasis on difference would countermark the [initial] perception of ideological congruence’ (Schuster 2011, p. 239, translated by author), in the narration of the transatlantic partnership.

The specification of values and the terms of engagement were also a means to negate the extraordinary war powers that resulted from the US “War on Terror” narrative. Keen to emphasise a difference in character, Germany soon began to favour the NATO’s ISAF mission over OEF (see Struck 2001, 14/210, p. 20832; 2003, 15/70, p. 5989; Scharping 2001, 14/210, pp. 20840-20841): ‘In light of the different character of OEF and ISAF – the former standing for offensive combat operations and the latter for an UN-authorized reconstruction effort – this meant focusing on the latter and limiting or downplaying Bundeswehr involvement in OEF’ (Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, p. 444). The focus on humanitarian and civilian engagement further helped to frame some of the implications of military engagement strategically.

The government increasingly sought to tie Germany’s strategic interest and self-defence to justificatory narratives for the engagement in Afghanistan. Defence Minister Peter Struck coined this justification most famously in 2004, with the phrase “Germany has to be defended in the Hindukush too”. However, the public remained uncertain about which and

whose interests were defended in Afghanistan as ‘the public never fully warmed to the policy, neither on the right nor on the left’ (Noetzel and Rid 2009, p. 78).

As a result, Chancellor Schröder and Defence Minister Peter Struck crafted an issue and policy narrative that sought to emphasise Germany’s valuable and significant contribution to conflict resolution more broadly. The focus on conflict resolution in this context also emphasised the role Germany wanted to play in hosting the UN Afghanistan conference in 2001. The role as a mediator fit both profiles that German political actors attempted to write for Germany’s identity narrative: that of a mature partner and that of civilian power.

In providing issue narratives that established a clear distinction between combat and civilian missions, Germany engaged in Afghanistan while portraying itself as not waging war. It further meant that Germany’s governing political actors could apply the maturity narrative in Afghanistan, without committing to the possible implications of the “War on Terror”. More broadly, the government’s narrative seemed to resonate in the public at least in part. It appeared not to support Afghanistan because it believed it served Germany’s strategic interest, but ‘because it carrie[d] part of the international community’s responsibility to fix a damaged country’ (Noetzel and Rid 2009, p. 78). However, highly publicised deaths of German soldiers and debates over “war-like circumstances” confused the narratives around the engagement’s purpose and objectives.<sup>12</sup>

With declining support for Afghanistan and a lack of Washington’s recognition, the maturity narrative thus later helped to legitimise and reason for the abstention in the Iraq War. The provision of the ‘epistemological basis’ (Hagmann 2015, p. 174) for the rejection of the “War on Terror” placed Germany’s strategic interest in the re-description of its role in the new world order. Despite efforts to increase Germany’s international profile and voice in the process of military engagement in Afghanistan, Berlin soon began to acknowledge that its attempt at being a ‘valued and dependable ally’, was insufficiently recognised in Washington: ‘Afghanistan did not prove to be a new opportunity to engage the United States in building a post-9/11 international order’ (Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, p. 445). Further, the ‘invocation of NATO’s Article Five ... was downplayed in Washington, with Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld commenting that the “mission determines the coalition”’ (Ibid.). Simply put, Washington’s use of NATO clashed with Berlin’s understanding of the post-9/11 international order.

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<sup>12</sup> Timo Noetzel and Thomas Rid (2009, p. 78) write on this point: ‘This ambiguity is reflected in the government’s treatment of the word Krieg. “War” is a loaded word in German. It still triggers memories of large-scale invasions, air-raid sirens and bombs raining down on major cities. The notion that Krieg should somehow be in the interest of the population among whom it is waged, a central notion of US counter-insurgency doctrine, has no resonance in Germany’.

Where Schröder and Fischer actively attempted to partake in forging the framework of an international order post-9/11, it appeared that the US had no interest in following suit. In narrating the attacks dominantly as attacks against civilisation, the government had further rejected many of the aspects of the “War on Terror” – a difference that would dramatically escalate during the Iraq War.

Further, the different approaches to Afghanistan had foreshadowed tension in the transatlantic partnership. It did not go unnoticed in Washington that Germany had been pushing for the establishment of a European CFSP and that German political actors appeared increasingly critical of the bellicose rhetoric that came from the US. At the Munich Security Conference, Fischer famously responded to Donald Rumsfeld that he “was not convinced” of the reasons or evidence the US had presented for engaging in Iraq.

Domestically, Chancellor Schröder had to account for the general election, which was to take place in 2002. The public was principally against participating in the Iraq War (see Hofmann 2003). Despite the pressure of the election, Schröder was aware that the decision to reject the participation in Iraq was a balancing act. After all, he had narrated the alliance duty around 9/11 and Germany had rooted its ontological security in the transatlantic partnership for decades. The UK had announced it would support a war in Iraq, which meant that Germany had to depend in part on France’s decision not to be entirely isolated. France’s president Jacques Chirac took time to firmly position himself on the Iraq War (Fischer 2011, translated by author). As Fischer (Ibid.) recalled in 2011: ‘If we had arrived at a situation in which France, Russia and consequently China had sided with the US we would have been alone in our rejection together with Syria – that we could not do’.

France’s firming stance on the Iraq question helped the German government to consolidate its position, without losing elementary sources of its ontological security. Further, ‘the new German assertiveness is better understood as a desire to not only be part of the West but also to define what “the West” is’ (Forsberg 2005, pp. 214-215). Where Tumoas Forsberg points to the explanation of Germany’s behaviour in Iraq, he falls short in conceptualising the maturity narrative as a tool for expanding the scope of action and flexibility. Whereas Afghanistan was an essential means of enactment and testing the viability of Germany’s policy choices, it appeared that it did not manage to expand Germany’s agency and voice in the process; the US’s narrative control over the mission was too firm. The movement toward more scope and the expansion of self-determination had to be further consolidated and ontologically secured. The rejection of participating in the Iraq War presented another opportunity to consolidate Germany’s newly narrated confidence, not least because the public

was overwhelmingly against it. To be sure, the invasion of Afghanistan and the Iraq War were to very different conflicts and the international response to and acceptance of both conflicts varied drastically. However, where Afghanistan had not provided an opportunity to enact the self-confidence, Iraq did because it was constructed in a way that spoke to the self-confidence that German policymakers narrated around 9/11.

In the context of 9/11, the engagement in Afghanistan, the rejection of Iraq, Germany's push for a European CFSP and its ambition to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council all served to enact the narrative of maturity by aiming to situate the *Self* within the narrations of the international order and the "new" threat landscape. It is important to remember that the aesthetic *Self* realises itself through policies. The movement narratives discussed here sought to enable the enactment of the redescribed aesthetic *Self* with increasing confidence. The military engagement in Afghanistan served as the symbolic test for and the enactment of the self-confident nation that Chancellor Schröder's government sought to forge narratively.

This consolidation of ontological security through movement was far from being unanimously accepted in parliament. The discussions around the rejection of involvement in Iraq did not indicate a failure of the government narrative, however, but more aptly spoke to the stakes involved for German policymakers. Two crucial parliamentary debates (February 13, 2003, and March 20, 2003) reflected the intensity and contested nature of Gerhard Schröder's position. In February 2003, the CDU/CSU (Deutscher Bundestag 2003, p. 3, translated by author) faction of the *Bundestag* introduced a proposal which '[requested] of the Federal government to adapt future behaviour in [the Iraq question] fully towards the elements of the declaration and wholly expresses its unity alongside other EU-partners in the UN Security Council'.

The conservative opposition was incensed. Not only had the conservatives supported the existential reading of 9/11 and argued that the participation in the Iraq War constituted an event that emerged from 9/11 and hence implied a similar threat assessment. Conservative leader Wolfgang Schäuble (2002, 15/10, pp. 536–538, translated by author) dismissed the government's approach harshly and argued that the foreign-political approach taken by the government was 'irresponsible' (see also 2004, 15/97, pp. 8605–8607, translated by author). Merkel (2003, 15/25, p. 1880, translated by author) went as far as to suggest that the German government had caused 'foreign-political damage'. More broadly, the conservative-liberal opposition argued that the failure to recognise Iraq as a Western challenge and problem meant selling out the Atlantic Alliance (see Glos 2002, 15/13, p. 873, translated by author) if not

divide it altogether (see Westerwelle 2002, 14/253, p. 25588; Pflüger, 2003, p. 3679). Rather than signalling stability and emancipation, the conservative-liberal opposition saw the rejection as a move that would ultimately render Germany internationally isolated. Felix Berenskoetter and Bastian Giegerich (2010, p. 428) have traced ontological insecurity by regarding ‘rhetorical indicators’, including ‘policymakers’ concerns about a re-emergence of the German question, isolation, a loss of recognition, and about Germany being thrust on a *Sonderweg* as evidence of fear of losing pertinent external bonds’. With these concepts in mind, it is evident that the opposition perceived the government’s stance on Iraq as an existential source of ontological insecurity for Germany. For the opposition, the rejection to participate in Iraq, therefore, constituted a profound threat to Germany’s ontological security:

I accuse you of a lack of authority. This lack of authority demonstrates itself in foreign-political unreliability and this foreign political unreliability we will have to pay for bitterly because it risks the authority of the European Union, NATO and the UN.

(Merkel 2003, 15/25, p. 1884, translated by author)

I am equally worried about the possibility of war as I am about the speechlessness in the German-American relationship. Mr Chancellor, if you call the President of the United States, no one will pick up the phone ... Are you out of your mind, when, in part circumventing your foreign ministry, you pursue a foreign policy based on the motto: “I will show it to Bush and Blair?”. Who, as a German, believes they can do that is an egomaniac, and we should be cautious of egomania.

(Glos 2003, 15/25, p. 1892, translated by author)

For the left party (*Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus*, PDS), the rejection to participate in Iraq was still not enough to demonstrate the emancipation from ‘misleading US politics’ (Pau 2003, 15/43 p. 3559, translated by author). The Schröder government, however, showed ‘no signs of conceding’ (Berenskoetter and Giegerich, 2010, p. 445). In the process of narrative construction around 9/11, the maturity narrative had been a convincing way to forge redescriptive movement.

## 5.4. Narrative Projection and Reception

The projection of narratives around 9/11 was decisively influenced by the prevalent media ecology. As the events unfolded live on TV screens around the globe, narratives unfolded at a similar speed. As Christoph Weller (2004) has argued, narratives formed, as they were projected. This section will discuss the conditions of the media environment and how political actors sought to project narratives by taking the media environment into account. However, unlike during the Schleyer kidnapping, the media environment and the global nature of the

event, made it difficult for German policymakers to attempt to gain authority over narrative projection. They, therefore, had to find a different way to work narrative power through the media ecology.

#### 5.4.1. The Media Environment of 2001: Narrating between the Broadcast Era and the Era of Diffused War

9/11 was a turning point for the change of media ecologies from the 'Broadcast Era' (Merrin 2014) to the 'Diffused War' (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2010) and propelled a new era of the media landscape more generally. The 'Diffused War' (Ibid.) affects 'mediatization, causality and decision-making' (Ibid., p. 1). Further, '[d]iffused war creates immediate and unpredictable connections' (Ibid.) between a wide range of actors, with particular implications for the interaction between government and media. The contrast between the 'Broadcast Era' (Merrin 2014) and the 'Diffused War' (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2010) is especially remarkable in terms of predictability and certainty. With 9/11, the new media ecology forced government actors to learn 'to live with ambiguity' (Ibid., p. 19). The 21st-century media landscape also compounded and accelerated the narrative cycle.

9/11 'became the media event with the most witnesses in the history of TV-broadcasting' (Schicha and Brosda 2002a, p. 7, translated by author). The live footage and continuous projection of images meant that some narratives were beyond the control of domestic political actors and thus far beyond the level of attempted political control as seen, for example, in the Schleyer kidnapping. Similarly, the production and projection of international narratives influenced how domestic actors could make sense of 9/11.

Further to this, the circulation and reproduction of images of 9/11 carried narrativity, beyond any strategic sensemaking. Journalists, TV commentators and witnesses had to grapple with what they were shown. They did so, not only through individual narratives, but their reactions were also subconsciously guided by affect. The initial inability to express and make sense of 9/11 also characterised the events' experience (Holland 2015; Holland and Solomon 2014; Solomon 2012).

The looping images of the falling Twin Towers resonated as the 'nightmare in catastrophe movies' (*Der Spiegel* 2001a, translated by author). *Der Spiegel's* description closely echoes Jack Holland's (2015, p. 172) findings in his research on affect and September 11, 2001: 'Interviewees were initially far more likely to invoke comparisons and analogies from popular culture, such as film, television, music and the Bible'. Further, Steele (2010, p. 52) argues that 'forms of technology (such as the Internet) accelerate the dissemination of

information so that such information remains slightly “ahead” of a power attempting to classify and regiment it’. The media ecology at the onset of the ‘Diffused War’ (Hoskins and O’Loughlin 2010) thus stimulated the collective experience of affect, even though the sources of media consumption dominantly resembled those of the ‘Broadcast Era’ (Merrin 2014).

The pre-mediation of narratives through affect and the speedy dissemination through media ecologies require analytical acknowledgement. In the complex co-production of 9/11, the narrativity of images, sounds, and the visceral experience joined emerging strategic and individual narratives. However, while 9/11 is seen as a marker date for the announcement of the ‘Diffused War’ (Hoskins and O’Loughlin 2010), much of its sensemaking, especially in the immediate aftermath still rested on the more traditional structures and logics of the ‘Broadcast Era’ (Merrin 2014). Notwithstanding the acknowledgement of affect, the focus here is on the projection of narratives at the intersection of both media ecologies. It follows that the interaction of media ecologies influenced the media environment during and after 9/11.

In Germany, the move of parliament from Bonn to Berlin brought the media and the political landscape closer together. Berlin had already established a media infrastructure and had seen increasing media presence since the early 1990s. At the same time, the move of parliament served as a ‘catalyst’ (Boberg, Hase and Johnson 2016, p. 222, translated by author) for Berlin’s media landscape. Many publishers and media agencies came to settle in the capital and by doing so, they increased market competition and economic pressures (Kramp and Weichert 2010, p. 20, translated by author).

With the changing parameters of media culture, content became increasingly personalised with a shift in focus toward scandals and drama (Ibid., p. 35) because they were easier to sell. Therefore, media outlets had to accommodate increasing consumer demand for dramatic, personified and scandalous content. Consumer-driven products also intensified a ‘race to public opinion’ (Von Lojewski 2011, p. 256, translated by author) in which politicians sought to use the changing demand of media structures to garner audience support. In the ‘race to public opinion’ (Ibid.) political actors took public opinion centrally into account, which also mattered for Schröder’s sensemaking of 9/11 as he weighed the options to deploy troops in Afghanistan and not to engage in the Iraq War.

At the onset of Gerhard Schröder’s Chancellorship, TV channels and newspapers were still the dominant sources for news consumption (Weller 2004), which did not mitigate the increasing consumer pressure of live news supply and daily content (Weichert 2011). The dynamic between both media ecologies had implications for the nature of reporting and the

ideological backdrop against which media outlets worked. The media's trend to centralisation and privatisation significantly shaped narrative projection and reception. Regional news outlets, for example, were increasingly covered under the umbrella of larger publishers, which meant that bigger publishers had considerable influence over regional and national narrative projection. For example, the 'Axel Springer publication house, including Bild, Bild am Sonntag, B.Z. and B.Z. am Sonntag owned 80 per cent of the market' (Beck 2012, p. 147, translated by author).

In the TV sector, private TV channels increasingly competed with publicly-funded channels, such as *Das Erste* (ARD) and *Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen* (ZDF). *Radio Télévision Luxembourg* (RTL), SAT.1 and *ProSieben* had taken a foothold of the TV landscape and thus added to its increasing fragmentation. The number of available programmes and broadcasting hours thus steadily increased, which resulted in a growing competition over viewers among TV channels (Ibid., p. 252). The changed broadcasting agenda intensified not only the need for personalisation and dramatic content, but it also provided political actors with a prominent stage for their strategic communication (Krüger and Zapf-Schramm 2003, p. 109).

As will be explored in the subsequent section, the changing media landscape meant above all that Schröder sought to harness the power of personification by working through the media structures: 'For Schröder the approval of someone like [the famous TV presenter] Thomas Gottschalk was more important than that of a statesman' (Anda and Kleine 2002, p. 199, translated by author). For the sensemaking of 9/11, Schröder's communication style and strategy had crucial implications, not least where public opinion was an important element of Schröder's strategic decision-making processes.

#### 5.4.2. Strategic Communication, the Red/Green Government and the Schröder System

Governmental strategic communication was centrally important for Schröder's Chancellorship. Inspired by Blair's New Labour strategy, the SPD's election campaign focused on professional PR-management and corporate design. It sought to use the changing technological possibilities for governmental communication. In his branding strategy, Chancellor Schröder prominently invented new terms, such as "Agenda 2010" for the SPD's social and labour market reforms to facilitate an identification with official policies. The Federal Press and Information Office underwent restructuring efforts toward a communication service provider (Kutz 2014, p. 157, translated by author), all of which pointed to the

centrality of communication during Schröder's terms. Both, Schröder's election campaign and his Chancellorship relied on 'staging professionalism' (Boberg, Hase and Johnson 2016, p. 232, translated by author). Because this strategy had been successful during the election campaign of 1998, it was also a core feature of his strategic communication and it influenced the 'communication style of the Red/Green government for years to come' (Salazar 2006, p. 75, translated by author). Korte (2002, p. 6, translated by author) argues that the Red/Green government was 'permanently governing in the style of election campaigns'. In this governance style, public opinion polls served as a crucial indicator that informed Schröder's policies as he sought to appeal to the general public. They were also crucially important for how Schröder aimed to enact the maturity narrative around the decision not to take part in the Iraq War (see section 5.3.4.). Factoring public opinion into policy decisions was thus particularly crucial during landmark decisions after 9/11 because these decisions rested decisively on public support, especially where they concerned German military engagement.

Schröder preferred a dominant leadership style through self-presentation. In establishing himself as a 'man of the people', he has been considered the original 'media chancellor' (Jakobs 2010). Others have argued that the mediatisation of his chancellorship is best described as the 'Schröder system' (König 2002, p. 18, translated by author). Although Schröder used the media very efficiently, the relationship was mutually constitutive; that is, Gerhard Schröder made use of the press very efficiently, but the press similarly made very efficient use of Gerhard Schröder. His frequent appearances on TV and the relevance of TV channels for Schröder's strategic communication pointed to a '(self-)mediatisation' (Rosumek 2007, p. 133, translated by author) of his chancellorship. 'His strength as a media chancellor,' wrote Jens König (2002, p. 18, translated by author) in the newspaper *taz*, 'rested on the fact that he did not only represent himself but that he was what he sought to represent. Schröder was always an actor ... but he was also always Gerhard Schröder'. With Chancellor Schröder's propensity for leadership and political communication, the sensemaking of 9/11 rested in many ways on his political communication strategy, not least where he was able to position himself as synonymous with German state action. This representational quality positioned him dominantly in the formation and projection of German identity narratives and '[m]edia outlets widely supported the dictum of "unwavering solidarity", despite – or maybe because – the declaration of solidarity had been accredited to Chancellor Schröder individually' (Nachtigall 2012, p. 146, translated by author), notwithstanding ideological differences between media outlets.

Helmut Uwer (2001b, translated by author), writing for the online version of the conservative newspaper *FAZ*, *FAZ.NET*, for example, argued: ‘The world changed last week with the dramatic events in New York and Washington. All of a sudden Schröder was tasked with being a statesman ... and demonstrated a calm, steady hand. Crises are what make this Chancellor strong’. Likewise, *Der Spiegel* (2001b; 2001c, p. 77) repeatedly described Schröder as a ‘crisis manager’ and ‘statesman’. *Der Tagesspiegel* (2001b, translated by author) wrote on October 14, 2001, that:

Schröder! The Juso-agitator of the 70s who was once driven by a desire for power has revealed himself as a Chancellor who grows to be a statesman from crisis to crisis. He has demonstrated the rights instincts after September 11 ... and has now declared a “development of Germany’s foreign political self-understanding” ... No one would have thought he would have this much insight and instinct only two years ago.

Chancellor Schröder’s initial reaction to the events of 9/11 was also prominently discussed among the main news outlets and TV channels (see Weller 2002, 2004). Characteristic descriptions of Schröder’s actions converged with descriptions of maturity found in the government’s narratives. *Der Spiegel* (2001d, p. 33), for example, wrote:

The governing actors in Berlin know that the world has changed drastically for them after the terror attacks in New York and Washington ... After the attacks on the US [they] have to rethink and define the external and internal security anew for 80 million Germans.

*Der Spiegel* thus linked the idea of a fully sovereign state to the confidence exhibited by Chancellor Schröder. The portrayal of him as a leader coincided with the narratives on Germany’s maturity and international ambition. In understanding mechanisms of narrative projection through ‘perspicuous instances’ (Jalbert 1999, p. 41), how media channels reflected on Schröder’s statesmanship thus revealed one way to show how Schröder’s self-representation was carried through the media landscape. At the same time, media outlets still differed decidedly in terms of which elements of different governmental narratives they focused on and how they projected on governmental narratives of rupture and maturity more broadly.

#### 5.4.3. Narrative Projection and 9/11: Projecting Rupture, the Maturing Nation and Self-Confidence

Before the newspapers went to press, the main news channels had reported on 9/11 non-stop. Between 15:48 and 15:49 CET special features began in ARD and ZDF, which then also instigated a continuous live-feed of and live commentaries on the events. Transcripts of the first six hours of live reporting (Weller 2002) of the three main channels ARD, ZDF and RTL,

demonstrated the process of sensemaking from shock to the attacks as acts of war: ‘What we are seeing has nothing to do with terrorism as we know it’ (*Heute-Sendung*, 19:05, in Weller 2002, translated by author) and ‘is really open warfare ... It is destruction’ (Ibid.). RTL reporter Christof Lang (RTL *Sondersendung*, 17:34, in Weller 2002, translated by author) similarly said:

This is the worst possible situation for Americans, for President Bush, this is a bigger crisis, and the big question is: How will he react? In principle, he has to retaliate, and I am a bit concerned that we are on the brink of a bigger war.

RTL (Ibid., 16:39) also commented that the events ‘were difficult to make sense of because it was so far removed from anything that could be imagined, something that we are normally able to when it is about acts of terror’. RTL (Ibid.) further argued that ‘what we see really is a declaration of war against the United States’. ZDF special commentator D. Ossenberg (ZDF, 16:45, in Weller 2002, translated by author) stated:

I believe that we can not only talk about a terrorist attack. This is war. We need to realise that, this is a declaration of war, this is entering into war, and I would like to say it again: The international political map and the international arena will change from today.

Especially in the immediate aftermath, dominant German news channels thus indicated how the speedy construction and narrative sensemaking of 9/11 as extraordinary, unprecedented and an act of war unfolded: ‘The view on things, the construction of what was happening and the narratives were established in an enormous speed, which stood contradictory to the facts known on the evening of September 11’ (Weller 2004, p. 263, translated by author). The initial sensemaking of the events as an act of war in the news media also influenced Chancellor Schröder in his initial reading of the attacks as he and audiences more broadly initially relied on media reporting (Ibid.). At the same time, Schröder also took up a prominent position in the immediate aftermath and sensemaking of the events on TV. RTL, for example, focused extensively on Schröder’s press conference given at 17:48 on September 11, 2001, by playing and replaying its content (Ibid.). While the TV channels’ sensemaking thus informed Schröder, he also gathered momentum and space for narrative projection during the immediate aftermath of 9/11.

To be sure, the act of war narrative faded later on, but it did not eradicate the perception of the attacks as extraordinary and thus as requiring extraordinary measures. Further, the frequent mention of the “new” terrorism of 9/11 contributed to setting the newness alongside the ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around the events.

Unsurprisingly, all German newspapers dedicated their next-day front pages to the

attacks and helped to shape the understanding of 9/11 as extraordinary, unanticipated and as separating the world into a before and after. Before changing its layout in 2007, the *FAZ*, for example, only ever printed front-page images in extraordinary circumstances. For the first time in its history, the newspaper dedicated two images on its front page to an event. In the course of the newspaper's history, it had only printed 33 images since 1945, including for events such as German unification. The *FAZ* special imagery also constituted an example of 'perspicuous instances' (Jalbert 1999, p. 41) that demonstrated how media co-produces the "writing" of historical events. How some media outlets broke away from their media routines, thus further stipulated the feeling of newness and contributed to shaping the extraordinary nature of 9/11.

Major German newspapers and magazines initially considered 9/11 an attack against the US, notwithstanding their comments on the extraordinary magnitude of the events and their international relevance (see for example *FAZ* 2001; *Süddeutsche Zeitung* 2001; *Der Tagesspiegel* 2001a). Where, the *FAZ* (Hefty 2001, p. 1; Schmidt 2001, p. 8) went further, however, was in underlining that the "new war" exposed a 'clash of cultures'; a reading that Schröder, for example, firmly rejected. Heins (2002, p. 136) also finds that '[t]he *FAZ*'s political discourse after 11 September combines, then, a militant Atlanticism with elements from the theory of cultures'. However, even where newspapers encouraged not to read the attacks as a sign for a renewed clash of civilisations, they contributed to consolidating the narrative. For example, former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt (2001), then editor in chief of *DIE ZEIT*, wrote:

It is a dictate of reason and morality to avoid that the mammoth crime translates into a conflict between the West and Islam. It is possible that the global clash of civilisations is the objective and hope of the attackers.

Josef Joffe (2001, translated by author) also argued in *DIE ZEIT*:

Terror must not be allowed to suffocate the dialogue between cultures ... and it must not be allowed to sow fear and hatred in the liberal world. It is for this reason that terror must be deprived of power – so that evil does not triumph over freedom and tolerance.

Where some newspapers and journalists thus warned of a clash of cultures, they still enabled the activation of narratives that presented 9/11 through a reading of the clash of cultures. As Alexandra Homolar and Pablo A. Rodríguez-Merino (2019, p. 564) argue: 'even if a frame is negated, it is still activated; and it is also amplified through repetition in definitional debates'. The important takeaway from the activation of the clash of cultures narrative, is therefore that, where 9/11 was 'discursive[ly] anchor[ed]' (Ibid., p. 561) around this narrative, it was almost

impossible for political actors to negate it, even if they had no intention of providing a reading of 9/11 through the clash of cultures narrative.

In considering the dichotomy between the “West” and Islam, it is further important to note that they are not “evident” opposites. The “West” is a political construct, whereas Islam is a religion. The production of this dichotomy thus fostered a reading of the “West’s” liberalism as standing in opposition to Islam. While Christianity did play a role in the sensemaking of the events – for example, *Bild* (2001, translated by author) headlined the front cover by stating “Grand God, be with us” on September 12<sup>th</sup> – the instructive nature of the production of the “West” vs. Islam helped to consolidate a reading of the attacks as the clash of cultures that Schröder wanted to avoid. Further to this, while the “West” was imminently tied to liberal values of freedom and tolerance, Islam was heavily connoted with both terrorism and backwardness. *Der Spiegel* (2001e) considered Osama Bin Laden’s terror as from the ‘Middle Ages’ and Joffe (2001, translated by author) wrote in the *DIE ZEIT*:

Instinctively the Western human searches for the “roots” of terrorism. It is just that this is a flawed approach: you cannot explain means by the reasons for deploying them ... Nihilists that have made murder a means and despair a carte blanche are not patients that can be therapized but enemies that have to be stopped. Of course, the Arabic-Islamic world suffers from dictatorship, poverty and injustice. But is the West able to remove Wahabit Stone-Age Islam and Iraqi totalitarianism, or the selfishness of oil-emirs and the power monopoly of mullahs?

The broad brush with which the ‘Arabic-Islamic’ world was pictured in terms of antiquated and violent characteristic features, juxtaposed the liberal and reasonable reading of the ‘Western human’ (Ibid.). Of course, this distinction is not new (Said 1978) and has been researched specifically in the context of 9/11 (Jackson 2005). What matters for this research is that when ‘[t]here is ... an “othering” labeling bias in the narrative construction of political violence, in particular when the event makes it possible to establish associations between Islam, violence and terrorism’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 574), then scholars have to pay particular attention to how these associations are discursively produced. As Jan Ross (2001, translated by author) wrote in *DIE ZEIT*:

Most German ... commentators focus on the relationship between Islam and the West, on the problem of fundamentalism or the international role of the United States. Commentators talked way less about terrorism and the terrorist – in theory, the phenomenon that we need to explain. Terror and its actors are apparently not too much of a topic after the end of the RAF

Ross not only addressed the cult of personification around the RAF members – especially Meinhof, Baader, Ensslin – but also commented on how German journalists and policymakers immediately tied the significance of 9/11 to its global implications in terms of relationships and the future of the international order. Ross’ assessment also reflects Filip Ejdus’ (2020, p.

2) understanding of a ‘critical situation’ in which two of his four characteristic features pertain to questions for the identity of the *Self* and the relationships of the *Self* with other actors. While especially the *FAZ* adhered closely to its conservative ideology and advocated a ‘militant Atlanticism with elements from the theory of cultures’ (Heins 2002, p. 136), the left newspaper *taz* – close to the Green Party and Fischer – reciprocated the government’s maturity narrative as a means to free Germany from a unilateralist and hegemonic US and to warn of ‘a slippery-slope effect’ (*taz* in *Ibid.*, p. 138) of violence. Further, it was now the time that ‘politics can no longer evade the consequences of its own rhetoric’ (*Ibid.*).

The warning of a ‘slippery slope’ (*Ibid.*) of violence also linked the idea of terrorism as a desperate act against misled US politics in the Middle East and the problems associated with globalisation more broadly. In mirroring Fischer’s call for a new international order, *Der Tagesspiegel* (Schmierer 2001, translated by author), for example, argued that: ‘Modern terrorism has settled in the fracture lines of globalisation. The next and most important task of the globalised world will be to settle the state system in a more comprehensive framework and order’. Further, *Der Tagesspiegel* (*Ibid.*) agreed with the narratives advocated by Schröder and Fischer that 9/11 meant that the hitherto existing international order had ended and needed to be shaped anew: ‘September 11, 2001, means the end of an already redundant international order ... no one cries for her’.

The portrayal of US hegemony indicated how the delegitimisation of the US “War on Terror” helped in the construction of the *Self* and the narrated self-confidence of Germany’s new position. Kirchhoff (2010), for example, found that media narratives on German identity built on multiple *Others*, including the “evil terrorists”, but also the “estranged and militaristic” US. The production of identity narratives thus also reflected on the government’s increasing commitments to a European or German identity, thereby negotiating the commitment to the transatlantic alliance – at the dismay of the opposition (see sections 5.3.3. and 5.3.4.).

The delegitimisation of US foreign policy had crucial implications for the legitimacy of Germany’s military engagement and arguably, Chancellor Schröder’s election campaign. Likewise, where Chancellor Schröder and Foreign Minister Fischer were often synonymously understood as the nation-state they represented, so George W. Bush was often synonymously read as the US. The idea of Germany’s changed position in the world – for advancing whichever objective – thus featured centrally in newspapers from the left and the right. *Der Spiegel* (2001d, p. 33, translated by author) for example, wrote:

Schröder and Fischer knew immediately that these monstrous attacks were more than attack against the United States. With the towers of the World Trade Centre in Manhattan collapsed the known order of international politics. The governing actors in Berlin know that with the terror attacks in New York and Washington, the world has changed profoundly for them too ... After the attacks on the US, the political actors have to rethink and define internal and external security for 80 million Germans.

Chancellor Schröder's declaration of unwavering solidarity was soon rhetorically materialised by employing frequent references to Germany's participation in an "Anti-Terror-Coalition" and equally rooted in Germany's indebtedness to the United States. Newspapers focused in particular on the government narratives of solidarity and maturity. *FAZ.NET* (Kaatz 2001, translated by author) argued that:

The most horrendous terror attack in world history will push the international convergence of values. States are coming closer together. The big picture: enlightened and liberal ideals, which causes hope because civilised values are a good basis ... The German Chancellor spoke of a declaration of war against the civilised world. Now it is about defending it. And Germany has to be part of that.

Further and soon after 9/11, *Der Spiegel* (2001f, p. 24, translated by author) wrote: 'The new Germany is a European state that can no longer claim special rights ... The scope of decision making to refrain from international crises ... no longer applies ... It is the price of growing up'. Closely connected to an understanding of the changes in the international order and Germany's role was a perception of Chancellor Schröder's responsibility as Chancellor to take up this responsibility. *Der Spiegel* (2001g, p. 23, translated by author) further argued that the Chancellor '[took] on growing responsibility in shaping the new world order' in which it also had to face a new reality: 'Politicians rarely go through times like this – in Germany, it was last Helmut Kohl 1989 when the Wall came down – [times] when we need political guidance, leadership and shaping power. The Chancellor is determined not to disappoint these expectations' (Ibid.). Similarly, *DIE ZEIT* author, Matthias Geis (2001, translated by author), described Fischer's transformation as growing into responsibility and maturity after the initial shock of 9/11:

If we saw a deeply shocked Foreign Minister after September 11 – as if he had just witnessed the apocalypse – he has now collected himself. He has progressed in the space of a few days from the incomprehensible terror of the collapsing towers of the World Trade Centers to acknowledging the chances of a "new world order".

Further, Geis (Ibid.) wrote that Fischer 'grasps the connection between the willingness to engage militarily and political weight ... and he doesn't want to be a second-class alliance partner forever ... Fischer wants it and Fischer can'.

The focus on the personalities Schröder and Fischer and the international outlook of reporting worked at least initially to counter the criticism that Schröder had faced in terms of

his domestic policies on economic reforms. A media analysis by Medien Tenor (2001) showed that while 16% of media reports talked negatively about the work by the Schröder government before 9/11, it was only 8% in October 2001. Further Medien Tenor (Ibid.) argued that Schröder's ability to lead was perceived more positively after 9/11 than before. While not a comprehensive review of media data, the instances presented here show different ways of how media outlets can narrate the projection of leadership.

In terms of Schröder's perception and his approval in media and the public, it is noteworthy that while 9/11 helped to distract from criticism on domestic politics initially, he was still set to lose the election of 2002. However, when he became increasingly outspoken about rejecting the participation in the Iraq War, he took public opinion centrally into account to swing the vote. Through the course of the 2002 election campaign, Chancellor Schröder toughened his stance on Iraq and moved to a clear and comprehensive rejection of military involvement in Iraq. With public opinion in Germany strikingly war-averse and the instrumentalisation of Iraq for the SPD's election campaign, the enormous amount of sympathy for the US after September 11, 2001, did not survive the dispute over Iraq (Kaim 2003, p. 139).

Not only did the overwhelming majority of the public support Chancellor Schröder's rejection of German participation in the Iraq War, but it also appeared that the discussion over the Iraq War had increased criticism of US unilateralism more broadly. Whereas in 2002, 68% of Germans thought a US leadership role in international affairs to be desirable, the number had decreased to 45% in 2003 (Kaim 2003, pp. 139-140), with significant consequences for the perception of the European Union (EU) as a balancing actor in world affairs. Whereas in 2002, 48% wanted the EU to become an international superpower – like the US – the percentage was up to 70% in 2003 (Ibid.).

These polling trends also reflected an increasing agreement that the EU was more important to secure Germany's vital interests than the US (Ibid.). Kaim (2003, p. 140) argues that the 'public [had] chosen Europe'. Although a provocative assessment, because swings in public opinion are often context-specific, the magnitude of these shifts supports Berenskoetter and Giegerich (2010) in their assessment that it appeared the Berlin Republic had found a means to stabilise ontological security through the EU, rather than the transatlantic partnership. It further supports the arguments of a readjustment of political orientation patterns in German foreign policy (Schiek and Ullrich 2011, p. 174) around 9/11.

What may appear contradictory to the argument made in this thesis, is that more than 9/11 the Iraq War dominated German news media, according to research by Kirchhoff (2010,

p. 274, translated by author). She says that ‘not the attacks in New York and Washington were the dominant themes, similar to the military engagement in Afghanistan ... The event about which ... media reported mostly was the war in Iraq’ (Ibid.). Rather than a contradiction, however, this speaks to the argument made in this thesis.

Whereas 9/11 had instigated the maturity narrative and made it feasible, the decision to reject participation in the Iraq War was its compelling proof. Where news media understood that Germany had to play a new role, it was not entirely clear around 9/11 what that meant, but instead was enacted and thus substantiated around Iraq. The enactment of the maturity narrative around Iraq thus powerfully brought action and narrative in alignment. The alignment facilitated the participatory interpretation with and emotional charge of identity narratives. This finding is a powerful reminder that: (1) the negotiation of identities takes time; (2) its effects become powerful through their credible, accepted and aligned enactment; and (3) identity negotiation and the narrativity of action are crucially interlinked.

In recognition of the difficulties of quantifying change in German foreign policy, Gunther Hellmann (2010; 2011a; 2011b) pays attention to the changing meanings of concepts such as “responsibility”, “maturity” and “self-confidence” in German foreign policy. Hellmann’s argument is principally in dialogue with research on conceptual change and the strategic construction of conceptual change (Bentley 2013; 2014). The maturity narrative fostered by the Schröder government around the events of September 11, 2001, cannot be a mono-causal determinant of changing perceptions of German foreign policy and the country more generally. Yet, the link between the maturity narrative and the changing indicators toward a more “self-confident” Germany in the world point to the crucial explanatory potential of the maturity narrative.

Survey data collected by the Allensbach Institute (Süßlin 2009) indicated that the Red/Green government fostered and contributed to the production of an understanding of Germany’s growing responsibility, maturity and importance in world politics. It further indicated that the maturity narrative resonated with the populace and that it was a valuable tool to make sense of Germany’s position in the world after September 11, 2001. When presenting a summary of findings of the 2009 Allensbach Survey on the Berlin Republic, Renate Köcher (2010, translated by author) stated:

In the eyes of the public, the Berlin Republic increasingly takes shape, and its perception changed both internally and externally. Initially only lightly contoured, German citizens increasingly associated the Berlin Republic with more power and international influence...The constructive role Germany has taken up in international affairs in the past ten years has consolidated ... the conviction of a majority of citizens that Germany is regarded highly in the international arena.

Self-confidence as a means to construct the *Self*, as well as a means to assess altered foreign political narratives points to Steele's (2010) understanding of the aesthetic *Self*. Irrespective of material substance and whether actions speak to a changed or continuous German foreign policy, the application of the movement narrative of maturity points to a significant moment of redescriptive movement to German identity narratives: 'The concept of self-confidence ... characterises a profoundly different understanding of Germany's role in Europe and the world' (Hellmann 2010, p. 3, translated by author). It is essential to understand the significance of this finding: '[At] the beginning of the 1990s, the only people calling for a "self-confident nation" were a scattered group of intellectuals from the "new democratic right" who bemoaned Germany's "broken" national consciousness' (Ibid. 2011a, p. 46).

The naturalisation and increasing political acceptance of self-confidence thus emerged with Gerhard Schröder, who had made it his objective to make Germany 'more confident externally' (Schröder 2005, 15/185, p. 17469, translated by author). The Allensbach Institute (Süßlin 2009, p. 42) found that between 1998 and 2007, respondents considered Germany to have increased its status in the world (39% to 50%). Respondents further assessed that it had increased its international weight (37% to 48% in the same period), its power (42% to 47%) and its national consciousness (41% to 47%).

To be sure, these surveys are neither proof for the success of Chancellor Schröder's narrative formation nor do they establish a causal link between the narration of 9/11 and the increase of self-confidence. Nevertheless, they indicate that the maturity narrative appropriated, if not encouraged, a renewed understanding of the *Self*. Further, they indicated the power of narrative alignment. Simply put, the narrativity of action, enactment, and narratives formed around 9/11, interacted constitutively. The extent to which it did, is certainly difficult to quantify. However, the striking continuity of the maturity narrative through 9/11, Afghanistan and Iraq, shows that it was a powerful means to and moment of identity building. Further to this, a more supportive populace also meant that political actors could expand Germany's foreign political scope of action.

In this way, the opinion polls indicated the possibility of an expanded scope of action for political actors, for example, in matters of foreign policy through acceptance. The expansion of accepted scope and behaviour had substantive consequences for foreign policy and the enactment of the maturity narrative. To illustrate: whereas an open push for becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council might have been considered inappropriate (see Hellmann 2011b), it became an increasingly viable policy. The increasing viability and expansion of scope meant that Chancellor Schröder's narration of 9/11 and the invigorated

maturity narrative had in part resonated with the public and permeated the media projection processes, notwithstanding media's and audiences' individual sensemaking logics and processes.

## 5.5. Contextualising Anxiety, Temporality, Agency and Identity Narratives

There is evidence for all four analytical markers in this chapter. The subsequent discussion will bring together the evidence and will discuss the implications of each marker for identity narrative negotiation during 9/11.

### 5.5.1. Anxiety

To start with, 9/11 as a global event produced uncertainty and anxiety by the mere magnitude of the events and their repercussions as dominantly featured in parliamentary discussions and media sensemaking, especially in the initial reactions to the events. Notwithstanding the sensemaking processes and strategic construction of 9/11, the scale of the attacks was in many ways unprecedented and sent shockwaves around the world. The shock was not only reflected in how, for example, news reporters made sense of the events, but also featured widely in how political actors initially responded to 9/11.

Anxiety also contributed to the initial sensemaking of the attacks as an act of war. News reporters and political actors frequently and initially argued that the events were incomprehensible in nature. The act of war narrative, as well as the reading of expectations, were therefore a means to settle uncertainty and to mould the incomprehensible into more known narratives. While this process concluded that the US had been attacked by an act of war, it did not outlast the long-term strategic construction around 9/11 by German policymakers. The dynamic between anxiety and available narratives might indicate that immediate responses to an event draw more readily on what is narratively available, whereas crafting more strategic and comprehensible narratives around an event can even come to contradict the initial sensemaking. In the case of Schröder and Fischer's sensemaking, the initial reading as an act of war did not hinder the construction of 9/11 as an attack against civilisation, especially where it served to set new 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around the events.

Further, 9/11 was also accompanied by a sense of anxiety around a potential war that loomed on the horizon. These anxieties were also paired with a more structural uncertainty that the end of the Cold War had produced. The structural anxiety also translated into questions on Germany's future role in the world, especially after its unification and in the relationship to, for example, the US. Furthermore, as Heins (2002, p. 130) suggests: 'For the German public there was the additional difficulty that these problems arose in a critical transition period of redefining the state's tasks, national feelings of self-understanding and the options in foreign policy'. As such, the structural uncertainty might have stipulated the need to fix these uncertainties, indeed to anchor them discursively, around an event that was able to seemingly compound these uncertainties in one moment.

Further, anxiety permeated the discussions around solidarity and pointed to concerns about Germany's isolation in the world and from its partners; a concern that featured dominantly in the opposition's sensemaking of the Schröder government's decision not to participate in Iraq. More generally, the anxiety around 9/11 fused individual and state-level anxieties where the fear of war and the concern about Germany's future role were dominant drivers in re-evaluating relationships and ultimately, the identity narratives of the *Self*.

### 5.5.2. Temporality

Temporality was a crucial factor in the sensemaking of 9/11 and for aiming to set 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) that could incorporate and simultaneously anchor the anxieties around 9/11. While different historical references evoked a sense of progressive continuity of time, the feature of rupture dominantly permeated the sensemaking of 9/11 throughout the narrative cycle. Most crucially the strategic construction of rupture specified 9/11 as an event that had divided the international order and Germany's political role in a distinct "before and after". The distinct writing of temporality helped to underline the magnitude of the event but also helped to establish the pertinence of a "new" form of terrorist violence and thus the establishment of 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.).

To be sure, 9/11 did not only constitute a rupture for German policymakers but also internationally. Writing temporal claims around the events of 9/11 (Jarvis 2008) was both a tool for sensemaking and of strategic use. Further, the sensemaking of rupture and the phenomenology of the event has caused some scholars to ask whether 9/11 was a foundational event for a 'generation 9/11' (Schiek and Ullrich 2011). The construction of temporality cannot, however, be separated from the strategic objectives that were pursued through specific ways of narrating temporal 'shapes' (Jarvis 2008, p. 246). In the context of German

policymakers, the writing of temporality around 9/11 helped to give sense to the maturity narrative at the same at which the maturity narrative constructed a temporality of the *Self*. The process of growth through time and the narration of significant “milestones”, such as 9/11 (but also unification) punctuated the *Self’s* experience. In Chancellor Schröder’s narration, the “milestones” in the process of becoming a mature nation were closely tied to a narration of responsibility around military engagement. Above all, however, he linked maturity to self-confidence, which was also evidenced by how the Schröder government attempted to enact it.

The narration of rupture also crucially linked to the sensemaking of the “new” threat landscape, which helped actors in the sensemaking of a “before and after”, not only for German policymakers but the international order more broadly. While the “after” was a future yet unknown, narratives sought to strategically help actors in taking part in shaping the unknown, not least where political actors recognised the strategic stakes.

### 5.5.3. Agency

The empirical chapter of 9/11 demonstrated how the narration of rupture and the maturity narrative empowered a sense of agency in the process of identity narrative negotiation. To be sure, German policymakers had to take international sensemaking and the structural conditions of Germany’s history and historical position into account. However, the structural factors did not hinder, especially Chancellor Schröder, to craft a compelling narrative around the events, especially where it concerned the narrative construction of Germany’s new role in the world. In a way, the already unsettled *Self* – Germany shortly after unification in 1990 – helped the persuasiveness and credibility of narratives that emphasised the importance of redescribing the *Self* and thus also enabled actors to exert considerable agency over the sensemaking of 9/11. Whereas governmental actors shaped and formed narratives, they sought to enact these narratives – most strikingly around the rejection of the Iraq War. The enactment of narratives also translated into the dominance of the events in the media projection. The rejection of the Iraq War made a powerful case for “proving” the self-confidence of the mature nation as crafted around 9/11.

Where the engagement in Afghanistan appears to have been an attempt at proving Germany’s willingness to be a fully sovereign member of the international community – freed of its post-WWII dependency from the US – the Iraq War seems to have substantiated these claims more credibly. They did so, because the government did not appear to link Germany’s ontological status to potential international isolation. The opposition certainly attempted to link 9/11, Afghanistan and the Iraq War to credibly argue that both Afghanistan and the Iraq

War necessitated Germany's participation. It follows that the opposition, instead, attempted not to disconnect but narratively link Afghanistan and Iraq, so as to argue that the same response – including military engagement – applied. However, the government was able to logically disconnect the reaction to Afghanistan and the Iraq War while maintaining that both events were an exhibition and demonstration of Germany's maturity and self-confidence. Where the government aimed to construct the engagement in Afghanistan as a means to repay a historical debt to the US, the narratives around the Iraq War signalled that the solidarity, duty and debt to the US had been paid and that Germany was now able to pursue its own strategic interest in the international arena. The maturity narrative also helped to negotiate expectations directed at Germany by the US.

In consideration of Berenskoetter's (2020, p. 282) understanding of agency in the process of negotiating the ontological status of the state, Schröder and Fischer stand out as actors who drew on 'creative constitutive agency' in seeking to redescribe the *Self*. The construction of a need for "newness" both in the international system and Germany's role within it, aimed to address the structural uncertainty stipulated by the end of the Cold War and to anchor it through fixing the meaning 9/11 around state identity narratives. The 'creative-constitutive' (Ibid.) nature of agency in Schröder's and Fischer's sensemaking of the event, became even more evident as they not only negotiated the events, but they did so in areas where narratives crafted by the US were taking hold, such as the act of war narrative.

The opposition, most dominantly Friedrich Merz and Angela Merkel resorted to 'creative-constitutive agency' (Ibid.) by seeking to reiterate and restore the meaning of the transatlantic relationship for German identity narrative commitments. This type of agency points to the fact that even attempts to recommit to existing identity narratives can constitute a form of creativity and thus "explorative" agency, as Merz and Merkel sought to actively shape the future of Germany's role and the international order through the narration of the event's singularity. The significance of shaping the future for enabling 'creative-constitutive agency' (Ibid.), is a crucial element for how actors can express the stakes involved in identity narrative negotiation.

Further to this, the 'creative-constitutive agency' (Ibid.) deployed in both cases showed that actors not only responded to anxiety through routine behaviours, but also through constructing a strategically meaningful sense of "newness" that helped to fix 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) as a starting point for enacting this "newness". Irrespective of whether German foreign policy or the German state became more powerful or assertive, the narration of maturity and self-confidence broadened the scope for

conceivable options in pursuit of foreign policy objectives. The expanded scope of action thus enabled a wider range of options for political actors to consider and thus also spoke pertinently to the exertion of agency through existing narrative structures.

#### 5.5.4. Identity Narratives, Identity Narrative Negotiation and Discursive Anchoring

Structural uncertainties paired with a violent crisis event provided a particular ground for setting ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) and for negotiating identity narratives, as actors sought to anchor these uncertainties. The setting of ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) can thus be perceived as a means to facilitate and enable agency around events that are understood and constructed as arbitrary, random and uncertain. The most striking aspect about ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) around 9/11 in German policymakers’ narratives was not so much that political actors sought to settle 9/11 through them to settle a new type of terrorist violence, but how they did so in conjunction with German identity narrative commitments: ‘This exploration into the politics of violent events highlights that the use of cognitive cues that foster terrorist understandings of violent events is far from an objective, automatic, or impartial process’ (Ibid., p. 574). The process of ‘discursive[ly] anchor[ing]’ (Ibid., p. 561) 9/11, linked the narration of rupture to the global threat landscape and narrated it as profoundly different to before. It also enabled actors to narrate parameters that could make sense of the new self-confidence in Germany’s international role as crucially significant in defending against this threat landscape. The process of ‘symbolically coding’ (Baban 2013, p. 144, translated by author) the event through the threat landscape and the role of the *Self*, spoke pertinently to the construction of ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) as linked to the newness of the threat, the threat landscape and the attacks as attacks against civilisation. The ‘construction of common insecurity’ (Hagmann 2015, p. 175) helped to set ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around the events of 9/11 as synonymous for the “new” terrorist violence the international community and Germany now faced.

As argued (see Chapter 2), the establishment and narration of the threat landscape is a process by which political agents can ‘[transmogrify] ... “crises” from subjective sources of anxiety to objective sources of threat’ (Steele 2008, p. 71). In the process of objectifying this threat, ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) help to settle the meaning of the uncertainty caused by an event. In the case of 9/11, the “new” reality narrative meant that the uncertainty could be explained by the “newness” of this threat and actors

sought to settle this “newness” by setting new ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) for terrorist violence. This was important not only to settle uncertainty, but also to align the character of ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) with the redescribed narratives of the *Self*. 9/11 and the subsequent discussions on the war in Afghanistan and later the Iraq War were thus a means to settle ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) alongside the “new” role for Germany within the forging process of a “new” international order.

## 5.6. Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the Schröder government and Chancellor Schröder, in particular, crafted a compelling narrative of the self-confident nation around the events of 9/11 which were subsequently enacted. Almost immediately after 9/11, the Schröder government sought to make sense of the event through a readjustment of Germany’s position in the world, irrespective of whether the event was strikingly unprecedented or not. The movement narrative of maturity provided an essential tool to negotiate German identity narratives while establishing ontological security through the process of narrative transformation.

The interaction between redescrptions of existing identity narratives and the movement narrative of maturity, served as a tool to establish ontological security through redescription, rather than aiming to alleviate ontological insecurity through continuity. The maturity narrative was thus able to develop coherent movement from that rupture by negotiating Germany’s identity narrative toward a “new” coherency around the ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) of 9/11. Powerfully so, setting ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) of 9/11 as evidence for a “new” type of terrorism, 9/11 also meant that the reactions to and the role of Germany were included in the anchoring process. If, for example, 9/11 had been settled through understanding the response to international terrorism by acts of retaliation and war, it would have likely also meant different avenues for enacting and facilitating such anchors, as seen in the case of the US. At the same time, the maturity narrative provided sufficient flexibility to incorporate seemingly opposing policy-decisions (engagement in Afghanistan and abstention in Iraq) by emphasizing the naturalisation of German strategic interest.

Whereas the moment of the event, the moment at which redescription, reiteration or restoration of identity narratives might be considerably short, how actors carry them through time matters for how they are projected, received, and ultimately identified with and

supported. The negotiation of identities takes narrative effort and so does the enactment of these negotiations. The dynamic also speaks to the interaction of multiple simultaneous short-term narratives in the process of identity narrative negotiation. While these matter for narrative formation, narrative enactment substantiates only some, while it neglects others. Crucially, if narrative and enactment become powerfully aligned, it is difficult for alternative short-term narrations to question the power inherent to this alignment. At the same, the interaction of these narratives is a crucial part of the sensemaking process; it reveals the contested nature of identity negotiations and what is at stake.

Encouraged by the disillusionment in the process of engaging in Afghanistan and by increasing agreement over CFSP as a viable alternative to the transatlantic partnership, it appeared that Schröder felt sufficiently confident to stabilise Germany's ontological security through the movement of maturity. For now, the Schröder government had at least won the narrative battle between different short-term narrations: 'Schröder's display of self-confidence in opposing the Iraq invasion and questioning the value of the transatlantic relationship indicates that dissonance with the United States did not generate ontological insecurity in Berlin' (Berenskoetter and Giegerich 2010, p. 446). For Berenskoetter and Giegerich (Ibid.), this was explained in part by the fact that CFSP had become 'a viable alternative for embedding the Berlin Republic'. However, this is only part of the story. The push for self-determination as narrated around the events on 9/11 encouraged by a public consensus on Iraq had been made sufficiently tangible. Whereas Afghanistan appeared to have only in part served as a test case for the maturity narrative, Iraq presented an even stronger opportunity to do so because it aligned with the sensemaking of 9/11. With increasing confidence, the Schröder government, therefore, found a means to provide ontological security through the movement narrative of maturity and to establish new 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around 9/11 that appeared to manifest ontological security through self-confidence.

# Chapter 6

## The Berlin Truck Attack of 2016 Negotiating Identity Narratives among Competing Crises

### 6.1. Introduction

In the two previous case studies, identity narratives had been subject to intense negotiation around the events. In both cases, the terrorist attacks constituted the singular political focus when they occurred. Their significance for the negotiation of German identity narratives was crucial, although different. In both cases, the event and its strategic negotiation had impacted the ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodriguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around the constitution of terrorist events. Political actors around the Schleyer kidnapping and September 11, 2001, had therefore strategically explored the negotiation of the state’s ontological status for a redescription of identity narratives, albeit with different effects.

This chapter seeks to assess, in particular, the relevance of competing crises for the negotiation of identity narratives around the Berlin truck attack. What happens when an event that, in theory, should provide significant space for the negotiation of state identity narratives – such as a violent terrorist attack – competes with other international and domestic crises that also provide significant space for the negotiation state identity? This chapter will, therefore, complement the variety of cases examined in this thesis by adding a case in which the terrorist attack was not necessarily the most dominant crisis at the time but instead a ‘critical situation’ (Ejdus 2020, p. 2) among them.

On December 19, 2016, a terrorist attack on Berlin's Christmas Market on Breitscheidplatz killed twelve people.<sup>13</sup> The Berlin truck attack happened at a moment at which Germany faced a range of internal crises (see section 6.2.). Significantly, the Berlin truck attack happened at a moment of heated discussions around the resurgence of populism in Germany and Chancellor Merkel's refugee policy. The discussions affected German identity narratives in a particular way: On the one hand, the surge of populism recalled the fear that Germany had still not overcome the dark and long shadows of its National Socialist past. On the other hand, Chancellor Merkel's refugee policy had invited harsh criticism from across the political spectrum, including from her conservative party members. It had further reinvigorated the populist debate on German *Leitkultur*,<sup>14</sup> which underlined the uncertainty around German identity narratives in light of Berlin's migration policies.

An analysis of the Berlin truck attack during a time of intense international upheaval and domestic disturbances provides an excellent opportunity to gauge the impact of uncertainty and multiple co-existing national and international crises on the constitution of an event. While the Berlin truck attack was not the first Islamist-extremist attack in Germany since September 11, 2001, it was nevertheless treated as the first 'major Islamist-extremist terrorist event in Germany' (von Münchow and Hantschke 2017, p. 26), which makes it an important 'critical situation' (Ejdus 2020, p. 2) to examine. It further provides an excellent opportunity to gauge on practices of 'discursive[ly] anchor[ing]' (Homolar and Rodriguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) terrorist violence in Germany.

This chapter will firstly outline the context in which the Berlin truck attack occurred and introduce the main political actors who sought to provide the sensemaking of the event. Further, this chapter will demonstrate different pre-existing readings of ontological insecurity into which political actors attempted to integrate the Berlin truck attack. Followed by the examination of the strategic narration of threats to ontological security, this chapter will further explore the government's narrative enactment, which focused dominantly on Interior Minister de Maizière's proposed legislation. It will continue to argue that the confusion over narrative formation and narrative enactment contributed to an indeterminate reading of the

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<sup>13</sup> This thesis refers to the attacks as the Berlin truck attack intentionally, as it is closest to a description of the incident in contrast to other names given to the terrorist attack, including Breitscheidplatz attack and Christmas Market attack because naming terrorist events is an important part of their sense-making. In particular the name Christmas Market attack carries narrativity by evoking narratives and concepts on and of Christianity.

<sup>14</sup> The German term *Leitkultur* (literally leading or guiding culture) has been front and center in many debates on Germany's migration policy. The term originated in 1998 by political scientist Bassam Tibi. Since Friedrich Merz (CDU) used the term in 2000 it has been subject to heated debates as to its validity, nature and inherent potential for supporting populist and far-right rhetoric.

events for German state identity. This chapter will further investigate narrative projection and reception along the narrative cycle.

In terms of the overall contention of this thesis, political actors did not narrate the event itself as a threat to the state's ontological security. However, different political actors sought to integrate the Berlin truck attack into narratives relating to other issue areas that they narrated as threats to Germany's ontological security. The conflicting sensemaking of the event and its strategic use, pulled it apart, which also meant that actors failed to establish a determinative meaning for German identity narratives around the events. Chancellor Angela Merkel, for example, integrated the Berlin truck attack in narratives that highlighted the threat to ontological security as the fragmentation of society. Interior Minister de Maizière emphasised the Berlin truck attack as evidence for the threat to ontological security posed by security risks and terrorism. The New Right instead narrated the Berlin truck attack as evidence for the threat to ontological security posed by immigration.

This chapter thus asks what happens when an event that, in theory, should provide significant space for the negotiation of state identity narratives, competes with other crises that also provide significant space for the negotiation state identity. While acknowledging that the analysis in this chapter is close to when the events happened, a preliminary answer suggests that the event became submerged into other crises and it did not provide sufficient space for the negotiation of German identity narratives. Where the event was emplotted (White 1997, p. 392) into other long-term narratives, its meaning submerged into them.

To be sure, the establishment of an event's meaning can take time. Further to this, events can and might be made to emerge again for the strategic negotiate the state's ontological status. The limited ability to trace the event's significance through time, therefore, constraints a more temporally comprehensive analysis. However, given the lack of determinative meaning of the Berlin truck attack for German state identity, it is unlikely for the event to harness forces to negotiate identity narratives around the event in the future. More generally, while the event's meaning for identity narratives was pulled apart by the conflicting and complex interaction of short-term narrations and long-term narratives, it did serve as a substantiation of the existing 'discursive anchors' of terrorist violence, namely 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodriguez-Merino 2019, p. 564) around Islamist-extremist terrorism. This chapter argues that, in doing so, the event lost its power for political actors to renegotiate identity narrative commitments around the events – other than those that political actors sought to substantiate and that they had previously attempted to put in place.

## 6.2. Context & Actors

From the viewpoint of ontological security, what appears most striking about 2016 is the sheer number of globally unexpected events. They had a significant impact on what constituted normalcy, not least in the functioning logic of the international order. Klaus Goetz (2019, translated by author) characterises the uncertainty as ‘turbulences’, which lead to ‘uncertainty, from the unexpected to erratic behaviour or the dissolution of rules, chaos. At the heart of it, the behaviour of political actors becomes more difficult to anticipate’. If ontological security, however, is guided by the ‘security-of-being’ (Giddens 1991) through time, Goetz’s observation has critical implications for the conduct of international politics. Further, if the global order rests on expected behaviours, it appears that the description of ‘turbulences’ (Ibid.) is an apt depiction of the developments in 2016.

By the Autumn of 2016, the United Kingdom (UK) had voted to leave the European Union (EU). Donald Trump had become the President of the United States (US). In the words of Brent Steele and Alexandra Homolar (2019, p. 214), ‘varieties of populism have gravitated from the fringes of politics into the centre’. Further to this: ‘They have gained traction in tandem with widespread perceptions of crises, insecurity and alienation’ (Ibid.). Indeed, it appeared that the ‘global wave of populism turned 2016 upside down’ (Taylor 2016).

Alongside a surge in populism and the success of populist candidates and movements, it seemed that 2016 was a year of continuous crises. A CIA report concluded with high confidence that Russia had meddled with the US elections (see Griggs 2018; ICA 2017). The Syrian War developed further with Aleppo falling, continuing the tragedy that has killed potentially as many as, if not more than, half a million people (see Specia 2018; Human Rights Watch 2018). Brazil and South Korea impeached their presidents after scandals, and Rodrigo Duterte became President of the Philippines. In Turkey, an attempted coup against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan failed. The Zika virus emerged as a significant global health threat, and the Panama Papers exposed the magnitude of global tax evasion. In addition to terror attacks around the globe, EU member states faced a series of terrorist attacks: Brussels in March, the assassination of British Member of Parliament Jo Cox in June, Nice in July and the Berlin truck attack in Berlin in December 2016.

*Der Spiegel* (2016a, translated by author) concluded: ‘what a year: hate and terror, wars and crises’. In addition to a variety of international crises, Germany faced a range of internal crises as well. On New Year’s Eve 2015-2016, a group of men gathered at Cologne’s central station and assaulted hundreds of women who wanted to bypass the crowd. The

assailants were predominantly of North-African descent, awaiting their asylum status. Police forces largely failed to gain control over the situation, and many cases remain unsolved. However, media and political actors swiftly weaponised the heritage of the assailants to corner Chancellor Merkel and criticise her “We can do this” (“Wir schaffen das!”) refugee policy, especially her “open door policy” that kept Germany’s border open for refugees amidst the refugee crisis that shook many European and international partners alike. The events in Cologne, therefore, intensified the already heated debate on Merkel’s refugee policies and the debate mixed with the surge of populist rhetoric and the significant growth of nationalist, anti-Islamic and xenophobic forces (see Fislage et al. 2018; Decker 2015). The far-right party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) became increasingly popular in *Länder* elections in 2016.

In 2015, xenophobic rallies of the so-called PEGIDA movement attracted 25.000 marchers in Dresden and other cities across Germany. It appeared that Germany was not free of the populist successes in neighbouring European countries (van Kessel 2015). At the same time, leaders of the AfD and the New Right movements invigorated a heated domestic debate by drawing on language very similar to language deployed by Nazis before and during WWII (Müller and Precht eds. 2019); at best they failed to distance themselves from Nazi ideology, at worst they fully embraced it. The use of language and the populist and starkly anti-immigration policies that the AfD and the New Right propagated – unfortunately rather successfully in garnering electoral support – closely tied to questions of Germany’s dark Nazi past. For decades, Germans had been proud that they had learned their lessons from the past and that they would never again grant power to far-right radicals. Nevertheless, then German voters made the AfD the third-strongest party in the country (Mounk 2018) and the party joined the German parliament (*Bundestag*) in 2017 but shared parliamentary seats in some *Länder* governments in 2016. The shockwaves of AfD’s success posed hefty and intense questions as to the viability of German democracy.

Similar to far-right counterparts elsewhere, the AfD presents itself as an anti-establishment party fighting against the taboos set by a society that the party accuses of being unable to address openly. Its close links to the far-right extremist spectrum and rather disturbing statements by its lead politicians have led to numerous constitutional complaints. The Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution has started investigating some of its fractions and members (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* 2020). However, the AfD’s electoral success has, in part, led to a change in the parameters of public discourse (see Bebnowski 2015; Ruhose 2019). While the AfD was not in the *Bundestag* at the time of the attack, it attempted

to decisively shape the debate around the Berlin truck attack. This chapter will look at then prominent members of the AfD and their reactions to and sensemaking of the attack, including Chairman of the AfD Northrhine-Westphalia, Markus Pretzell and AfD Chairwoman Frauke Petry.

Amidst this turmoil, Merkel continued to govern Germany. In 2016, she had been Germany's Chancellor for 11 years, during most of which, her party had been in grand coalition governments with the SPD. The big Volksparteien,<sup>15</sup> SPD and CDU/CSU had, however, experienced their turmoil and crises, with voter shares dropping drastically. The developments further questioned the predictability of Germany's parliamentary set-up. As a result, elections of the future will likely be more susceptible to unanticipated outcomes, not least because Merkel will not seek to be re-elected in the general election of 2021 (Le Blond 2018).

Merkel is internationally well-recognised and praised by *TIME* magazine (Gibbs 2015) in 2015 as 'providing steadfast moral leadership in a world where it is in short supply'. Her unwavering stance on Germany's open border refugee policies had in part earned her international admiration (Chu 2015; Horn 2015). Domestically, however, it had caused criticism from all sides, including her party (Faiola 2016; Karnitschnig 2018). Despite harsh criticism from all sides, Merkel showed no signs of conceding – a decision which has been subject to discussion (see Crawford and Czuczka 2013). While some have asked what drives Merkel's choices amidst isolation (Feldenkirchen and Pfister 2016), others have suggested that particularly her decision to keep borders open can be partly explained by her biography (Mück 2017).

Angela Merkel grew up as a pastor's daughter in former East Germany. After graduating from high school, she studied Physics in Leipzig, still under the auspices of an authoritarian regime. Her upbringing and education have led some scholars to argue that 'the historical circumstances explain Merkel's seemingly closed-off character. She had to be very careful about what she said to whom' (Schulz 2013, translated by author). The biographical backdrop of Merkel's rhetoric is also relevant to processes of narrative sensemaking, not least because her leadership style and personality have been considered as closely intertwined (Mück 2017, p. 256). Chancellor Merkel has been a central figure for understanding German politics in the last decade. Her biography and upbringing can shine a light on those political

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<sup>15</sup> The defining type of political party in the post-war German political system. It is a controversial model of the catch-all party developed by Otto Kirchheimer (1965). More specifically, it describes the dominant parties SPD, CDU (and by extension CSU) who, for decades, had the highest voter shares. For a discussion of the concept, see Lösche 2009; Hofmann 2004; Krouwel 2006.

decisions that are relevant for the analysis in this chapter. Merkel's use of language has been described as 'conciliatory' (Uwer 2001a, translated by author), 'cold and controlled' (Sagener 2013, translated by author) and as 'making few binding commitments' (Schulte 2017, translated by author). More frequently, critics have accused her of a lack of empathy and have considered her an 'anti-rhetorician and a denier of emotions' (Pörksen 2020, translated by author).<sup>16</sup>

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Angela Merkel was quick to realise the new opportunities that unification presented, and from thereon, her political career developed steadily (Langguth 2008; 2009a; 2009b). In December 1990, she won her direct mandate to join the *Bundestag*. In December 1991, Angela Merkel became Deputy Chairwoman of the Christian Democratic Party (*Christlich Demokratische Union, CDU*), and after the election of 1994, Environmental Minister. In 2005 – after a disastrous election result for the CDU and its Bavarian counterpart, the Christian Social Union (*Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern, CSU*) – she was elected as the youngest Chancellor in German history to govern in a grand coalition with the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, SPD*) (see Langguth 2008; LaPides 2015). Fast forward, by 2016 Chancellor Merkel had firmly maintained her reputation through steady leadership. While Chancellor Merkel has resolutely established herself as central to German politics, she has not always managed to avoid harsh domestic and international criticism. Her handling of the Euro crisis, for example, invited a widespread international and domestic backlash (Wagsytl 2015; Augstein 2015; *Der Spiegel* 2015).

At the time of the Berlin truck attack, she governed the grand coalition with the SPD, with Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD, later to become Germany's President) as her Foreign Minister until 2017 and later replaced by Heiko Maas and Thomas de Maizière as Minister for the Interior. Other prominent figures of Merkel's third Cabinet included Wolfgang Schäuble, Finance Minister until October 2017 and Heiko Maas, Minister for Justice and Consumer Protection.

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<sup>16</sup> From a Feminist perspective, the criticism of Merkel as a 'denier of emotions' (Pörksen 2020, translated by author) speaks particularly loudly to the double standards in the evaluation of female politicians against their male counterparts. Further, Merkel has been popularly referred to as "Kohl's Mädchen" ("Kohl's girl") or "Mutti" ("Mommy") in German media (Al-Khalaf 2018), which also points to the need for a critical evaluation of presentations of female politicians in power (see Campus 2013; Lünenborg and Maier 2015).

## 6.3. Narrative Formation

On December 19, 2016, Anis Amri hijacked a truck and crashed it into a Christmas Market on Breitscheidplatz in Berlin, claiming 12 lives. Islamic State declared responsibility for the attack only a couple of hours later. Anis Amri fled and was lethally shot on December 23, 2016, by Italian police officers in a town near Milan. He escaped Berlin and travelled to Northern Italy through the Netherlands, Belgium and France. Anis Amri had been a Tunisian national awaiting his asylum status, which was relevant to the political sensemaking that emerged after the attack because '[t]he attack re-heated the debate about Berlin's migration policy at large' (von Münchow and Hantschke 2017, p. 26). As a result, 'calls for security-related reforms ... flourished' (Ibid.). The significance of the attack was further intensified by the fact that it was treated as the first 'major Islamist-extremist terrorist event in Germany' (Ibid.), even though previous attacks had happened before. Further, commentators in the news media immediately compared the attack to the truck attack in Nice of July 14, 2016 (see sections 6.4.2 and 6.4.3.), adding that terrorism 'now also hit Berlin' (Potts 2016, translated by author).

While the sensemaking of the event and narrative formation happened instantaneously not least through media and social media channels, the parliamentary discussion of the events did not occur until January 19, 2017, because the parliamentary calendar for the year had ended. Moreover, commemorations such as the memorial service, all happened between the initial response and the parliamentary debates. Only a day later, for example, Merkel, Federal President Joachim Gauck, Germany's political elite, civil society and religious leaders of all faiths gathered to mourn the victims (Leber and Dobberke 2016) in the Berlin Gedächtniskirche. The memorial service took place under the slogan "a wound in the city" ("Eine Wunde in der Stadt"). While Merkel did not speak during the memorial service, Berlin's mayor Michael Müller (in Kensche 2016, translated by author) stated:

Too often in the recent past, we had to light our Brandenburg Gate in different national colours out of solidarity with cities that have been hit by terrorism. Tonight, it will be coloured in the colours of our city and will once again be a place of solitude and solidarity, united by the firm determination that terror and horror will not take our open Berlin from us.

He further stated that while 'we hoped Berlin would never be a target of terror ... this hope has now been taken from us' and that the 'attack was an attack on our way of life, our values and our democracy' (Ibid.). Müller (Ibid.) further said that 'together we will face this attack with all strength as well'. In focusing on the values of the city, Müller did not specify the attacks as an attack against Germany at large. Further, where the Brandenburg Gate was

coloured in Germany's national colours, Müller spoke of the colours of the city. In closing his speech, he quoted the former Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg after the attack on the Island Utøya: 'Our response will be more democracy, more openness and more humanism'.<sup>17</sup> The citation of a far-right attack was in so far remarkable, as it spoke to a wider trend reflected in the initial responses by some governmental actors; namely to avoid evoking some 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around Islamist extremist terrorist violence and the politicisation of these anchors by populist forces.

As will be discussed, expressions of grief and narrations of solidarity appear common after events that rattle the ontological security of the state. However, scholars can still examine the specificities of narratives of solidarity as they exert political agency and as actors engage in the production of meaning around the events. For example, Merkel's construction of the event denied the event as a rupture to the ontological security of the state. The type of unity she envisaged rested, instead, on stability and continuity, very different to de Maizière and the New Right.

### 6.3.1. The Rejection of Rupture and the Narrative of Stability

Chancellor Merkel's first reaction to the attacks were two tweets by Government Spokesperson Steffen Seibert (for a discussion of tweets and the intersection of formation and projection in the 21st-century media ecology see sections 6.4.1., 6.5.1. and 6.5.2.). The tweets, posted at 8.39 pm, stated: 'Terrible news from #Breitscheidplatz. Chancellor #Merkel is in contact with the Interior Minister and Berlin's Mayor (1)', 'We mourn the dead and hope that the many injured can be treated (2)' (Seibert 2016, translated by author). More formally, Angela Merkel (2016a) spoke at an official press conference on December 20, 2016, at 11:01. After the conference, she met with the Security Cabinet, and later that day visited the Breitscheidplatz to commemorate the victims. Scholars have examined ritualistic patterns of reaction to and commemoration after attacks (see Couldry 2005; Brown and Hoskins 2010; Hoskins 2011; Hepp and Couldry 2010; Kitzinger 2000; Mortensen 2015b). In researching these patterns, scholars have paid particular attention to media rituals (Brown and Hoskins 2010), mediatised rituals (Cottle 2006) and practices of solidarity (Couldry 2005;

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<sup>17</sup> On July 22, 2011, the Norwegian right-wing extremist Anders Behring Breivik carried out two terrorist attacks: one close the Norwegian Prime Minister's office and later at a summer camp of the Workers' Youth League (AUF) at the island of Utøya. As Maria Konow Lund and Eva-Karin Olsson (2016, pp. 358-259) summarise: 'The attack was the deadliest in Norway since World War II, claiming a total of 77 lives and wounding 319 people as well'. On practices of resilience and mediality around the Norway terror attacks see Enough (2015).

Eroukhmanoff 2019). Scholars have further argued that '[t]raumatic events can trigger a collective emotional understanding' (Eroukhmanoff 2019, p. 175) and thereby aiding the formation of 'affective communities' (Hutchison 2016). As Clara Eroukhmanoff (2019, p. 175) further argues: 'Affective communities are consolidated through the performance of practices involving physical assemblies, apparent through the marches and the beds of flowers' or memorial services. In this way, '[c]ollective expressions of peace, love and solidarity are anchored as an emotional knowledge or emotional "know-how" guiding individuals about how to emotionally behave when terror attacks happen' (Ibid., p. 176).

The scholarship on 'affective communities' thus points to the memorial service as a means to foster expressions of solidarity and to forge the 'affective community' (Hutchison 2016) through these expressions. In linking Eroukhmanoff's (2019, p. 176) anchor of 'emotional knowledge' to Alexandra Homolar and Pablo A. Rodríguez-Merino's (2019, p. 561) concept of 'discursive anchors', this chapter will show that rituals such as the memorial service also help to consolidate anchors around terrorist events, especially where they are fused with an emotional charge. Terrorism can thus be identified as terrorism not only by the event itself but by the rituals of commemoration, mourning and the collection of shared grievances that draw on each other. The quick formation of hashtags that were similar to hashtags used in previous terrorist events, also speaks to these rituals of commemoration (see section 6.4.3.). Both the visit of the Breitscheidplatz the next day and the memorial service at the Gedächtniskirche constituted such practices of commemoration.

Chancellor Merkel's speech on the day after the attack (2016a, translated by author) began with an outline of the implications of the attack for the broader populace and the victims involved:

Today is a tough day. As are millions of people in Germany, I am shocked and deeply saddened by what happened yesterday on Berlin's Breitscheidplatz ... I want you to know: We all are, and an entire country is, united in deep mourning.

The dominant feature of her first narrative sensemaking was unity in solidarity, which stood in contrast to conceptualisations of rupture discussed, for example, around the narration of 9/11 (Chapter 5). For Merkel, the terrorist attack constituted a disturbance to the peace of the people and their ordinary life, not, however, to the state itself. Instead, Merkel emphasised the functioning of society and the state that ensures it. She continued to state that: 'I thank all investigators. I trust all men and women that are working on solving this case since last night. It will be solved in every detail, and it will be punished as harshly as our laws allow' (Merkel 2016a, translated by author). Chancellor Merkel sought to assure the populace and other

audiences that the liberal democratic state was well equipped to address the uncertainty that the incident caused.

How the attack was made sense of crucially implied a link to state identity negotiations, especially where it concerned an understanding of participatory citizenship and the values of society: ‘Political agents influence *how* stories about violent events are told ... influencing both the category and the intensity of the state’s response’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 567, italics added). Merkel’s (2016a, translated by author) focus on the cohesion of society as a response to terrorist violence thus placed the focus not on the terrorist event itself but instead on its broader implications for society’s ‘way of life’:

millions of people – me too – ask this morning: How can we live with the fact that during a stroll over a Christmas market, that is a place in which we celebrate life, a murderer brings death upon so many? I do not have an easy answer to that. I only know: we cannot, and we will not live without these things: without Christmas Markets, the lovely hours spend with family and friends on places outside. We do not want to live with the fear of evil paralysing us. Even if it is hard in these hours: We will find the power for life as we want to live it in Germany: free, together and open.

The functioning of society, as represented by the ‘celebration of life’ (Ibid.) and the assurance of continuity, took centre-stage in the event’s sensemaking. Chancellor Merkel’s vision of Germany, incorporated in the understanding of freedom from fear, was that of a free, open country in unity. She stated that people would find the strength for life, continuity and unity. Whilst she briefly discussed the perpetrator, the understanding of the “enemy” remained intentionally loose.

This thesis has dominantly examined what actors say. Equally important, however, is where they choose to place silences. Merkel did not consider the event as a rupture, or a war-like act. To be sure, the lack of narrating rupture did not help in constructing new ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p.561) around terrorist violence. However, the silences Merkel chose to place around the attack as an attack against Western civilisation can still be seen as an attempt to negotiate some previously set characteristics of Islamist terrorist events. The silence is significant specifically where Merkel sought to actively place the threat to ontological security in the erosion of society’s cohesiveness. Merkel’s definition of the problem thus explicitly focused on a specific way of talking about civilisation – one that did not evoke a binary reading of the “West” against a non-Western other. Where there ‘is ... an “othering” labelling bias in the narrative construction of political violence, in particular when the event makes it possible to establish associations between Islam, violence, and terrorism’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 574), it is also crucial to

acknowledge that this bias is not an automatic side-effect of ‘discursive anchor[ing]’ (Ibid., p. 561) practices but likewise an agentic choice that political actors can make.

The lack of specification of the Berlin truck attack was not only evident in Chancellor Merkel’s sensemaking. Neither the President Gauck nor Berlin’s mayor Müller invoked the concept of Western civilisation in speeches following the Berlin attack: ‘It is remarkable, indeed, that neither Merkel nor Joachim Gauck nor Michael Müller literally use the notion of the West or of Western values, respectively’, writes Ann-Judith Rabenschlag (2020, p.179). As stated, Mayor Müller even referenced the right-wing-extremist terror attack in Utøya, rather than previous cases of Islamist extremist violence.

Given that Chancellor Merkel’s speech was not a spontaneous expression or reaction, ‘it seems more likely that the choice of formulation was a conscious one’ (Ibid.). Further, Rabenschlag (Ibid.) argues that Chancellor Merkel tried to ‘avoid the construction of an opposition between the West and its enemies’. The reason for doing so rested in part on an attempt to direct and pre-mediate the anticipated populist narrative landscape.

In acknowledgement of the polarised dynamic of populist rhetoric that had dominated much of 2016, Chancellor Merkel sought to narratively establish unity, in the absence of a binary reading of the *Other*. It placed continuity and stability as derivatives of these values. Simply put, the narrative encouraged the state and its citizens to gain stability through the continuity of value narratives that positively characterised the *Self*. The concept of a global society sought to encourage unity through compassion and empathy. Berlin’s mayor Müller (2016, translated by author) expressed himself similarly: ‘This act is an attack against our way of life, against our values and our democracy.’ He further clarified: ‘It is up to us to shape our cosmopolitan city peacefully. Respect, tolerance, non-violence: these are our shared values’ (Ibid.).

Further, political actors focused extensively on expressing empathy with and compassion for victims and relatives. SPD Chairman Sigmar Gabriel (2016a, translated by author): ‘We are in mourning. Our thoughts are with the victims in Berlin and their relatives’. Thomas Oppermann, SPD (2016, translated by author): ‘I am speechless and shocked. My thoughts are with the victims and relatives’. Martin Schulz, SPD (2016, translated by author) tweeted: ‘Terrible news from #Berlin. Thoughts are with family&friends of the victims, wishing injured speedy recovery and first responders strength’. Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, SPD (in *B.Z.* 2016a, translated by author) – who would later become President – also tweeted: ‘My heartfelt empathy is with the families and relatives of the

victims ... We do not know yet with certainty what happened tonight. Security agencies are working at full capacity to secure the site of the incident and to find the perpetrators’.

Minister of Justice Heiko Maas (2017) tweeted: ‘United in mourning. Bundestag commemorates the victims of the #Berlin truck attack. Will do everything to protect security+freedom’. Sigmar Gabriel (2016b, translated by author) added: ‘In these difficult hours we are all Berliners. Our values, our freedom is more powerful than hatred & terror #Breitscheidplatz’. The government’s initial reaction thus spoke a coherent narrative of unity and in defence of values, most dominantly freedom. It appeared that the dynamic of reactions to the Berlin truck attack balanced concerns over the politicisation and instrumentalisation of the attack. They emphasised a tolerant and open society at the same at which actors sought to readjust security legislation.

While in some ways political actors sought to pre-mediate the anticipated sensemaking in part to take the wind out of the sails of populist forces such as the New Right, they were still not able to avoid the othering bias – not least where the nationality of the attacker played such a dominant role in making sense of the event. Even Merkel, who had strikingly avoided any allusion to the “Western *Self*” implicitly confirmed the ‘labeling bias in the narrative construction of political violence’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 574), by stating:

For now, there are many things about this act that we do not know with sufficient certainty. However, from what we currently know, we need to classify this as a terrorist attack ... I know that it would be particularly hard for all of us to bear if it were confirmed that someone who sought protection and asylum from Germany had committed the attack.

(Merkel 2016a, translated by author)

Further, the speed of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century media ecology also meant that the pre-mediation was too late and ineffective. Political actors had already taken the opportunity to turn the debate to Germany’s refugee policies. The Bavarian Minister-President Horst Seehofer (CSU) (in *Deutsche Welle* 2016, translated by author) demanded that ‘we owe it to the victims and the citizens that we are reconsidering and adjusting our immigration and security policies’. Joachim Hermann (in *Die Welt* 2016c, translated by author), Interior Minister of Bavaria also stated that if it turned out the incident had been an attack by someone awaiting asylum status, ‘then it would have to lead to a fundamental engagement with how we manage the acceptance of refugees’ and that ‘people without peaceful intentions’ were ‘among the refugees’. The Head of Conference of Interior Ministers, Klaus Bouillon (CDU) (in *Die Welt* 2016a) went even as far as to attest that: ‘We have to acknowledge that we are living in a state of war, although some people who would always like to see the good side, do not want to see that’. The far-right had also already taken up the issue and tied the attacks to Chancellor Merkel’s

refugee policies (see section 6.3.2.). Further, refugees narratively functioned as evidence for populist narratives on terrorism as “brought into” Germany together with the refugees. The CDU politician Wolfgang Bosbach (in *Die Welt* 2016c) likewise declared that ‘in the face of the threat levels we need to figure out to make our country safer – without infringing on our freedoms. In doing so, we need to know who is coming into our country’.

Through discursively substantiating the othering bias already important in the sensemaking of 9/11 (see Chapter 5), political actors specified that the threat to Germany’s material and ontological security was external to Germany. It followed that while the Berlin truck attack did neither provide sufficient space for setting new ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around terrorist violence nor for renegotiating identity narratives, it did help to substantiate previously set ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) around terrorist violence. In the process of substantiation, actors were keen to weave the meaning of the Berlin truck attack in existing long-term narratives.

For example, Minister of the Interior Lothar de Maizière narrated the attacks in specifying the German liberal democratic order and in specifying the enemy. The difference is relevant because particularly de Maizière took up a prominent position in reasoning for the policy responses in reaction to the Berlin truck attack. De Maizière (2016a, translated by author) called upon the emotional bond as created by shock: The people’s unity called for a society in which people had to take care of each other. The narrative designed a unified society that did not ‘resort to fear’, and that could ‘face evil’ and the ‘enemy of the of the liberal democratic society’ (Ibid.). The ‘enemy of freedom’, as went the narrative, could only win if society retreated, and changed its way of life (Ibid.).

This way of life was not merely a *description*. It served as a *prescription* of order, normalcy and to outline the conditions necessary for society to function. De Maizière (Ibid.) declared: ‘As difficult as it may be in the face of the attacks ... we must not let those that seek to in such an appalling manner, destroy our free responsible way of life ... We are mourning, and we are fighting for our freedom’. More than Chancellor Merkel, the Interior Minister specified the characteristic features of this way of life, which also meant that while de Maizière negated the rupture, he still narrated urgency to the state’s responsibility, the ‘purview of ... agency’ (Steele 2008a, p. 73) and the state’s response. In doing so, de Maizière sought to link the events to a broader narrative on internal security that he had previously attempted to shape.

Only two days after the attack, de Maizière gave an interview with *Bild* (de Maizière 2016b), and an interview with *Bild am Sonntag* on December 25, 2016 (de Maizière 2016c).

Similarly, on January 3, 2017, de Maizière (2017a, translated by author) published an article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)* titled ‘Guidelines for a Strong State’. In the initial sensemaking of the terrorist attack, de Maizière thus suggested that it was now the hour to act. Prescriptions of temporality served to underline the urgency and strengthened the moment as in need of decisive state intervention. In doing so, de Maizière advocated the realisation of those policies that he had proposed before the attack. To be sure, this meant firstly that the event posed an opportune moment for policy timing and to garner support for the upcoming general election of 2017.

Consequently, many of the Interior Minister’s speeches that made sense of the attack were strongly characterised by attempts to gain electoral support. However, where de Maizière attempted to link the Berlin truck attack to state responsibility, he also aimed to narrate visions for the future state around the concept of internal security. The guidelines published in *FAZ* (de Maizière 2017a), for example, formed part of a broader strategy and designed a vision of proper political conduct and state behaviour into a coherent formulation of envisaged state responsibility. De Maizière narrated state responsibility dominantly as the prevention of crime and the alleviation of threat in times of uncertainty and the risk posed by terrorism.

De Maizière sought to solve the paradox of regulating uncertainty by narrating legislative proposals and the rationalisation of counterterrorism policies. In doing so, he outlined the management of uncertainty as being possible through exerting control over uncertainty. The legislative proposals embedded in policy narratives served to provide a “plan” to establish governability and ultimately legitimacy of the state as envisioned within these parameters. He thus focused more explicitly on the role and responsibility of the state to address the threat posed by terrorism. This sensemaking meant that the Interior Minister narrated the threat to ontological security, not in the fragmentation of society, but instead in dangerous individuals from within society. It followed that despite Chancellor Merkel’s intentional caution and narrative of the open society, and despite a general agreement among political actors with this narrative, alternative narrative work was well underway.

### 6.3.2. The Diverging Use and Fragmentation of the Berlin Truck Attack’s Meaning

In examining the different narrations of the threat to Germany’s ontological security, this chapter argues that the event was pulled apart and its meaning submerged into identity narrative negotiations in other areas. This section will address this complex interaction in

more detail and will show how the event was pulled apart and by whom. It will also look at who tied the event's meaning to which long-term narratives and objectives in which way. Government representatives and oppositional actors drew on diverging narrations of the threat landscape and strikingly different foci for the narration of threats to Germany's ontological security and proposed resolutions. The divergence resulted in a conflicted reading of the truck attack altogether because they also suggested different implications for the negotiation of Germany identity narratives.

As argued, Chancellor Merkel's placed the threat to ontological security in the potential fragmentation of Germany's open society. While Merkel did not argue that the event caused society's fragmentation, she feared that it had the potential to contribute to it. In attempting to accommodate and tend to the understanding of the threat to ontological security, Chancellor Merkel sought to forge meaning of the event so that it would not contribute to the division and demise of the open society. For Merkel, the Berlin truck attack thus offered the potential to underline the importance of shared values as a means to foster social cohesion. At the same time, she understood that the attacks carried the potential to drive society's fragmentation. In seeking to incorporate the event into broader narratives of global uncertainty, she attempted to narratively counter uncertainty through narrating the unity of people and democratic values.

One of the narratives that made sense of global uncertainty is best described as an apocalyptic system narrative. Through this narrative, Chancellor Merkel made an effort to narrate the world and the state system as fragile, imbalanced and in crisis. Where she focused on the continuous narration of crises, she sought to strategically contrast stability, unity and rationality as the solution to these crises and the uncertainty they carried. When this chapter, for example, argues that the Berlin truck attack was submerged by narrations around uncertainty and competed with multiple crises, Merkel's narration of the apocalypse narrative helped in doing so. Put differently, Chancellor Merkel's strategic placement of uncertainty through system narratives was a means to contrast the stability gained from unity fostered by democratic and liberal values. However, it did little to give the Berlin truck attack space for identity narrative negotiation.

The apocalypse narrative served as a system narrative, into which Merkel could logically incorporate issue, identity narratives and ultimately, crises. Terrorism and counterterrorism "sit" within that system narrative and the system narrative can make sense of both terrorist crises and the state's response. The apocalypse narrative told a story of

unprecedented disruption to the known (international) order against which Merkel sought for stability to gain more meaning.

Within this apocalyptic narrative, Chancellor Merkel – as well as other political actors who joined her in substantiating this narrative – not only provoked a sense of systemic instability (as well as fear, uncertainty and anxiety), but they also positioned themselves as rational actors capable of governing such unruly times. Merkel elevated the free, democratic and open state as the means with which uncertainty could be addressed. The state took the primary function in this logic and constituted the ordering device through uncertainty, anxiety and crises, which also spoke to an attempt to substantiate the need for a state-centric international order. This logic sought to stabilise and substantiate the significance of the state for the individual life of each citizen. The apocalypse narrative aimed to forge and foster not only state power but trust and legitimacy in the state at a time where both appeared to erode. Chancellor Merkel tried to incorporate the event of the Berlin truck attack into this reading of state responsibility with the objective of underlining the state's significance and stability. She thus sought to incorporate the attack into narratives that underlined stability as the core concern and into longer-term political objectives and long-term narratives that guided these objectives.

In 2016, Germany stood at the crossroads of many of its cornerstone principles. Although a strong voice and leader in the Eurozone crisis (see Hertner and Miskimmon 2015), the harsh austerity stance on Southern European states had questioned whether Germany was at a 'tipping point for classic German Europeanism' (Paterson 2011, p. 59). Further, where Merkel had eschewed the 'pro-European rhetoric of a common European destiny' it departed 'dramatically from Germany's traditional solidaristic approaches to EU partners' (Bulmer and Paterson 2010, p. 1050). The refugee crisis intensified this stance, as it appeared that Germany circumvented traditional pathways to a common solution more rigorously than before. Chancellor Merkel embedded these developments into a broader trend around narrating the significance of Germany's role in times of uncertainty, for Europe and the international order alike. In September 2016, Merkel (2016b, translated by author) stated that:

Germany will change, as we all do if we are not made of stone, but it will not lose confidence, will not be shaken in its fundamental principles. [We did not lose confidence] even in this decisive, uncertain past year. Who, if not us should be able to turn these times into something good.

Already before the Berlin truck attack, therefore, Merkel's narrative of uncertainty linked the significance of the EU as a community of destiny to the survival and stability of the German

state. In this narrative, solving crises meant to solve the process of European integration as well as solve the threats to domestic unity. As Merkel (Ibid.) further stated: ‘This is why I unabatedly fight for awakening what the European Community once stood for: solidarity and unity in values’.

It further meant that for Germany to play a leadership role in Europe and to realise its responsibility in the world, it had to be unified at home. Chancellor Merkel’s significant link between domestic unity and the disorder of the world intensified the obfuscation between domestic issues and Germany’s foreign policy:

Berlin’s policymakers are worried that spreading disorder in the international system could be replicated within the structures of the EU and the country itself. The connections between Germany’s domestic and foreign policy have never been as strong as they are now.

(Janning and Möller 2016)

This context set the scene for the sensemaking of the Berlin truck attack. Not only did Merkel have to convince a critical public at home but she had to convince European partners of Germany’s stability and its refugee policy, especially where Europe was strongly divided over shared responsibilities (Meier 2018; Karnitschnig 2018; Traynor 2015) and Merkel’s narrative of solidarity. The focus on reconciliation thus served to stabilise domestic audiences, not only to demonstrate unity but also to persuade European and international partners that Germany was the stable, reliable and democratic country it sought to represent. The narration of the Berlin truck attack tied to this narrative. The Berlin truck attack served as evidence for the need for unity in values. Merkel ‘emplotted’ (White 1997, p. 392) the attack into her narratives on Germany’s role for the EU and around international crises. Through the ‘emplotment’ (Ibid.) into her longer-term narratives, Merkel used the Berlin truck attack to substantiate them, rather than weave long-term narratives around the singularity of the Berlin truck attack. The difference here, is one of narrative focus. For Merkel the focus was stability, and not the singularity of the Berlin truck attack.

In contrast to Merkel, Interior Minister de Maizière did not focus on the fragmentation of society, but on the faceless threat living amidst society. This faceless threat was personified and named by drawing on the term *Gefährder*.<sup>18</sup> In doing so, he sketched the parameters of a threat landscape that was no longer either external or internal to German borders. The enemy was the unknown figure of the *Gefährder*. At the time of its invocation around the Berlin

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<sup>18</sup> A literal translation would be “threatener”. More aptly a *Gefährder* can be described as a person who carries the risk to realise a threat in the future.

truck attack, the term *Gefährder* was not new; it gained attention in 2007 when then-Minister Schäuble (2007) called for a ban on mobile and internet use for potential terror suspects.

The Berlin truck attack is nevertheless vital for an understanding of the *Gefährder* debate because attacker Anis Amri gave the known unknown a face and a name. While Amri was therefore not necessarily used to anchor terrorist violence, he was used to substantiate a ‘discursive anchor’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around the *Gefährder* and thus the “faceless” enemy and threat. The notion of the *Gefährder* mirrored the narrative role of sympathisers as identified in the 1970’s strategic narratives (Chapter 4). To be sure, both groups differ fundamentally, and their status for the Federal security agencies or amongst political actors is not comparable. Narratively, however, their function is very similar: sympathisers and *Gefährder* are an unspecified group of people that political actors understood to carry the potential to harm society and that formed a legislative target of governmental policies. The specification of this *Other*, referenced the clandestine and unknown characteristic features of the threat; one that was juxtaposed by narratives and policies that sought to quantify and rationally address the unknown threatening *Other*. Giving the *Gefährder* a name and a face served to substantiate that the quantification of the risk of the unknown was possible and indeed, politically necessary.

Anis Amri thus made possible what the *Gefährder* category aimed at doing: he materialised and personified the non-materialisable and non-personifiable potency of threat. In this way, the narrative focus on the *Gefährder* around the Berlin truck attack served not so much to narrate changes to the threat landscape. Instead, for the Interior Minister in particular, it served to substantiate the previously narrated threat landscape. Put differently, the focus on the *Gefährder* as the threat to ontological security also meant that the *Gefährder* group constituted the legislative focus to enact these narratives. Notwithstanding efforts by Merkel to narrate social cohesion, the government’s narrative enactment focused on the legislative treatment of the *Gefährder* group. The focus of enactment skewed the initial narrative formation and broader narrative landscape to a focus on Germany’s immigration and security policies, despite Merkel’s efforts to avoid such narrative sensemaking.

How did the *Gefährder* legislation enact which narratives? As outlined, the system narratives of uncertainty and terrorism served to contextualise the *Gefährder* group and the government narrated hitherto existing legislation as insufficient (see Maas 2017, 18/211, p. 21156; de Maizière 2017, 18/211, p. 21162). Further to this, value narratives placed the *Gefährder* external to the values of the *Self*. The *Gefährder* became the misfit; the antithesis

in, and on, the story of the *Self*. Policy narratives placed the *Gefährder* at the heart of legislative action.

Paradoxically, however, where the *Gefährder* was identified as a threat to the ontological security of the state, the implied characteristics of the *Gefährder* further increased the feeling of risk and threat (see Böhm 2011; Bude 2014). The use of the *Gefährder* as the target of the government's narrative enactment, therefore, did little to alleviate the feeling of threat. The *Gefährder*, therefore, provided a legislative target, despite ill-defined characteristic traits (Wegner and Hunold 2017, p. 371). With the term *Gefährder* dependent on its narrative construction, a twofold subjectivity drives its assessment: that of the individual assessing the threat and the more general subjective assessment of risk and threat at a given moment in time.

The *Gefährder* requires a narrative substantiation of risk because the personality of the *Gefährder* and the personification of risk cannot escape their *subjective* judgement. Simply put, the *Gefährder* risk assessment will always ever be an incomplete and subjective probability calculation. It follows that this probability calculation works with personified categories without possible knowledge of whether this probability calculation can measure the realisation of threat potential (Ibid., p. 373). As a result, this probability calculation rests on an underlying – politically constructed – narrative process. The personification of risk assessment creates a story about the potential perpetrator that includes significant aspects of the *Gefährder's* life to make sense of the *Gefährder*.

The Berlin truck attack and Anis Amri were substantiations to this story and a point in case to how political actors constructed personifiable risk. Anis Amri narratively functioned to carry forward narratives that aligned 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) with the Berlin truck attack. The *Gefährder* for the sensemaking of the Berlin truck attack was thus both: an *element to* strategic narratives and subject to a *process of* narrating risk.

The *Gefährder* as a legislative focus, however, would lack substantiation, if political actors did not find a means to narrate the actualisation of this risk; that is give risk a face and a name. The Berlin truck attack was narrated as evidence for the potential of risk. De Maiziere (2017b, translated by author) stated for example: 'The threat levels were already high before the attack in Berlin, and they still are. Germany and many other Western partners are still in the focus of international terrorism. The number of *Gefährder* currently counts roughly 550'.

The rationalisation of policy narratives, in which numbers and facts tilted an inherently subjective process (i.e. the categorisation of a *Gefährder*) towards a seemingly

controllable entity, was only possible by substantiating the reality of *Gefährder*. The Berlin truck attack served as a groundwork in which the policy narratives on legislative action could intertwine such rationalisation processes with government action.

To be sure, the Berlin truck attack was also used for a “simple” instrumentalisation of the event for policy timing: ‘Here, an event – the Breitscheidplatz attacks – helped overcome the coalition-internal dispute that had so far paralysed the policy process ... While the 18<sup>th</sup> legislative period started slowly, it developed into a phase ... of significant intensification of law-and-order politics’ (Wenzelburger and Staff 2018, p. 562, translated by author). Therefore, the Berlin truck attack did serve to overcome previous hurdles for passing security legislation.

However, where the *Gefährder* tied to the threat landscape and the ‘purview of [state] agency’ (Steele 2008a, p. 73), legislative action also became a means to enact narratives. Accordingly, the BKA Bill of February 2017 sought to enact Germany’s resolute reaction to the Berlin truck attack by easing regulation on deporting *Gefährder* and allowing for the implementation of electronic ankle monitoring for *Gefährder*. The BKA Bill was a decisive contribution to the increasing centralisation of police work from a *Länder* to the Federal level. The BKA Bill was not new; it had been brought to parliament before, but the Federal Constitutional Court deemed some aspects, such as data regulation amendments, unconstitutional in a verdict of April 20, 2016. On February 14, 2017, the bill was reintroduced to parliament and this time in close alignment to the sensemaking of the Berlin truck attack. Then Justice Minister, Heiko Mass (2017, 18/219, p. 21938, translated by author), stated:

With the attacks on the Breitscheidplatz, terror has finally arrived in our midst. We are determined to do everything so that the Amri case will not happen again. A rule of law that can defend itself is the best response to the terrorists’ hatred. As a consequence, I have drafted a ten-point plan together with my colleague de Maizière ... to improve our laws and their enforcement. We want to realise this plan swiftly and resolutely.

The notion of *wehrhafter Staat*, which was particularly prominent during the Schleyer kidnapping (see Chapter 4), resurfaced and juxtaposed the ‘hatred of terrorists’ (Ibid.) by arguing that the rule of law was able to defend itself and that by safeguarding the rule of law terrorism could be overcome. By drawing on the state’s ability to defend itself, Maas thus reactivated some elements of previously set ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around counterterrorism, namely that the state and its institutions were strong and that the rule of law was well equipped to counter the terrorist threat. Maas (2017, 18/219, p. 21938, translated by author) clarified that ‘attacks ...[had] unfortunately become a

reality in our life'. In acknowledging this reality, de Maizière (2017, 18/219, p. 21976, translated by author) not only co-constructed this reality but also suggested that it was time for a sea-change in Germany's security architecture:

What do I mean by the term "paradigm change"? The BKA's information architecture ... stems from the 70s, a system of many and independent data pots. This system was created by the then Head of the Federal Criminal Agency, Horst Herold, who had developed it in connection to the West German RAF terror. It was modern and revolutionary then, as well as controversial. It is no longer timely.

On the occasion of the BKA Bill's third reading, de Maizière (2017, 18/231, p. 23249, translated by author) said that the bill meant 'something big for the security and safety of our fellow citizens'. He also clarified that 'we are deciding on a row of security laws that fit our security-political fabric. They serve to acknowledge the challenges of our time' (Ibid.). For de Maizière, the BKA Bill was thus a means to lay the groundwork for the future of German internal security and a milestone in a long-term legislative process. The legislative reaction to, and narrative enactment of, the Berlin truck attack and the role of the state thus fit into de Maizière's proposed reorganisation of Germany's security architecture. It thus constituted another way by which the Berlin truck attack was incorporated into long-term narratives that made sense of long-term political objectives. While de Maizière did not argue that they had brought it to a conclusion, he did argue that the legislation was a crucial milestone in the process of building this architecture.

For understanding processes of identity narrative negotiation around terrorist violence, it is crucial to pause and consider the significance of de Maizière's proposals in light of the Berlin truck attack. Where the Berlin truck attack was used as evidence for the need of a sea-change in Germany's security architecture and for reconsidering the concept of internal security, it could be understood to have provided a space in which identity narratives were negotiated. Such an argument would run contrary to the argument made in this chapter. However, the crucial point here is that the Berlin truck attack served as substantiation for existing policy narratives on internal security, rather than that it was narrated as an event that required a redescription of German identity narrative commitments. By establishing a close link between policy narratives on internal security and the Berlin truck attack, de Maizière took space for other narratives – crucially identity narratives – to be linked to the event. To be sure, just because de Maizière used the Berlin truck attack in this way, did not mean that other actors could not seek to establish a link between identity narratives and the Berlin truck attack. However, as this section will continue to show, the close tie of the Berlin truck attack to existing long-term objectives held by political actors meant that the Berlin truck attack

never fully linked to identity narratives that were understood as meaningful or settled (see also section 4.4.). De Maizière (2009, translated by author) had already stated existing objectives to amend Germany's security architecture as early as 2009:

It is a core task of the democratic state, maybe the core task, to provide for the framework of order to facilitate and secure freedom, to guarantee security in freedom. The justification for the state's monopoly of violence is based on the very trust of the citizens that the state can guarantee security for all.

De Maizière outlined the importance of internal security for the very existence of the monopoly of state power and as such the state itself. Further, aiming to consolidate the long-standing debate between the binary of freedom and security, de Maizière narrated the state's core task in providing security for freedom. Applying the concept of 'normative invalidation' (Bentley 2017) to de Maizière's long-term sensemaking, security took priority over freedom by arguing that it enabled it. In this process, internal security and public security served as the binding force between the public and the state. Security provided the essential function of society and constituted the social glue. According to de Maizière's narrative, internal security of the individual was only possible with a state guarantee for public safety and security.

In such a conceptualisation of the state, the state was responsible for the internally felt safety and security of the people. In narrating the state, de Maizière reflected on the 'stellar career' (Saupe 2010, p. 170, translated by author) of the term internal security in guiding narratives around German security policy. For Erhard Blankenburg (1992, p. 162, translated by author), internal security is a 'conceptual battle cry of conservative security policies'. Here, the narration of the concept of internal security served to substantiate and legitimise security policies along with a broader narrative of conservative politics. To be sure, the political purchase attached to forging the meaning of the concept of internal security was not exclusively limited to conservatives. The authority over forging the concept's meaning was subject to political contestation among the political spectrum precisely because it served as a guiding dispositive of German security politics. How meaning was attached to it had to be renegotiated at moments at which actors could assume authority over forging its meaning.

Aligning the proposed legislation with Germany's security architecture was further a means to negotiate the fact that increasing centralisation was anything but a continuity of Germany's security architecture. The acknowledgement of the "new reality" of Germany's security and narrating it as a reaction to the demands of modernity legitimised the centralisation. It is useful to recall that 9/11 and the narration of Germany's new role in the world, was narrated around similar temporal claims.

The Berlin truck attack also helped to argue a case for centralisation in the narration of modernisation. The negation of *Länder* security powers rested firmly on writing temporal claims among a variety of actors, such as Uli Grötsch (2017, 18/231, p. 23250, translated by author) of the SPD: ‘I am telling you the time for working next to each other, for *Länder* sensitivities must be over ... terror does not stop at borders’ (see also Mayer 2017, 18/231, p. 23252).

In the process of narrating the Berlin truck attack as evidence for the need of centralisation, different actors corroborated de Maizière’s objective to narrate the Berlin truck attack in alignment with a more general transformation of state responsibility. In the context of the Berlin truck attack, the reiteration of identity narratives thus sought to give credibility and weight to shaping the guiding principle of and narratives on internal security. The conceptual load of internal security did not change by itself. It became increasingly significant the more it was narratively attached to meaningful experiences. The Berlin truck attack was narrated in a way that previous conceptualisations of the role of the state and its changing ‘purview of ... agency’ (Steele 2008a, p. 73) could be substantiated.

In contesting the political concept of internal security and in writing the future of German security policy, the government thus sought to gain grounds on providing a meaning of the Berlin truck attack that could link to and substantiate the need for long-term political objectives. By showing resolve and state strength, they also attempted to demonstrate that the state was quickly capable of reacting with what was legislatively necessary. However, where the Berlin truck attack tied closely to the realisation of policy objectives, political actors insufficiently attended the link to identity narratives in the sensemaking of the Berlin truck attack.

In also seeking to take part in the sensemaking of the Berlin truck attack, the New Right, and the AfD, in particular, were quick to form narratives. In the immediate aftermath of the terrorist attack on Breitscheidplatz, at 21:15 State Chairman of the AfD Northrhine-Westphalia, Marcus Pretzell (2016b) tweeted: ‘When does the German democracy punch back? When will this damn hypocrisy end? They are Merkel’s dead! #Nizza #Berlin’. At the point of publication, the attacker’s identity had not been verified.

Similarly, Frauke Petry (2016, translated by author), AfD Chairwoman posted on Facebook on the evening of the attack. Her post was an accusation of Chancellor Merkel’s refugee policies. By doing so, she brought the refugee debate in direct correlation with the attacks, even though the nature of the incident was then unclear. Frauke Petry (Ibid.) stated:

Not a single word on who is responsible for these acts, namely opening doors...to let in masses of illegal immigrants without checks and controls ... This [the terror attack] is not only an attack on our freedom and our way of life but also our Christian tradition. On the question of immigration Germany is a politically divided country ... Germany is no longer safe. It would be the duty of the Chancellor to tell you this. Since she is not going to do it, I am telling you ... Under the blanket of compassion, Merkel has given up our internal security.

The two AfD politicians thus also explored the concept of internal security and attempted to forge its meaning according to their ideological beliefs. As in Chancellor Merkel's, and Interior Minister de Maizière's case, the political event served to substantiate the meaning and credibility of existing narratives. The political event was thus evidenced as the materialisation of previously forged strategic narratives. In blaming Chancellor Merkel and the political elite more broadly, the AfD sought to substantiate the populist self-portrayal as a movement against the elites.

The AfD narrated the threat to ontological security in the *Other* as a brushed-over group of "the migrant" from countries with dominantly Muslim populations. In this narrative, violence and terror had been brought to Germany, strategically silencing decades of ill-attended far-right terrorist attacks and also mirroring of the government's *Gefährder* rhetoric. The process of *Othering* was an essential part of narratively constructing the ontological threat to German security. On the celebration of Germany's unification on October 3, 2016, Pretzell (2016a, translated by author) emphasised the threat by establishing a populist binary between a German European identity and the "Oriental world":

Today the great colonial power of Europe ... is about to let itself being colonized—by people who to a major part consider the laws of their religion to be more mandatory than the laws of the states into which they have immigrated. About half of them lives mentally in the 7th century. Many of the immigrants from the oriental world do not think anything of democracy, a state of law, gender equality, religious freedom and the freedom of speech. Instead, most of them consider the Western lifestyle to be decadent ... They bring neither aqueducts nor wine [as the Romans], but analphabetism, veiled women and the jihad to Europe.

Pretzell's narration of the "Oriental world" as the threat to Germany's ontological security combined a multitude of aspects commonly found in populist rhetoric. The threat to Germany's ontological security narrated by the New Right was not one produced by the Berlin truck attack. Put differently, the Berlin truck attack as a violent manifestation of crisis did not produce the populist rhetoric. Instead, populist rhetoric performed the crisis and continuously needed to find and narrate events into this crisis narrative. As Benjamin Moffitt (2016, p. 119, italics in original) has convincingly shown:

Rather than just thinking about crisis as a trigger of populism, we should also think about how *populism attempts to act as a trigger for crisis*. This is due to the fact that crises are never "neutral" phenomena, but must be mediated and "performed" by certain actors, setting

the stage for populist success. It argues that populist actors actively participate in this “spectacularisation of failure” that underlies crisis.

The drumbeat of ‘spectacularisation’ (Ibid.) needs events, such as the Berlin truck attack, to align with this narrative pattern and to substantiate the narration of fundamental crisis that threatens the livelihood and the very existence of the democratic state and its people. That the performance of crisis worked – at least in the short-term – was indicatively suggested by an INSA survey between 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 2016, published by *Die Welt*. In it, the AfD could gain two percentage points up to 15,5% in the question on if a general election were to take place, who citizens would vote for.

For ‘discursive anchor[ing]’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) processes around crises, the performance of the terrorist crisis aimed to settle terrorist violence as evidence for the threat from the “non-Western *Other*”. For the New Right, the performance of crisis served as an antidote to the value of continuity by drawing on narratives that claimed to retell history’s truth. Christianity here functioned not so much to emphasise religious vigour and belief, but to examine reality through this historical narrative.

A reaction that spoke directly to the use of Christianity in the sensemaking of the event was the symbolic performance instigated by the right-wing extremist movement *Ein Prozent* (one per cent). The movement organised a protest by gathering in front of the Chancellor’s Office on December 21, 2016. Among the attendees were Björn Höcke, a prominent AfD politician, as well as Alexander Gauland, party chairman of the AfD. Apart from AfD politician Franz Wiese, a Protestant priest (in *Ein Prozent* 2016, translated by author) spoke at the event stating that ‘when innocents are attacked and threatened with murder and manslaughter, the word of Jesus to turn the other cheek does not apply’. Instead of drawing on a parable urging for Christians to ‘have the right to resistance’ (Ibid.), ‘his parable matches with the ideology of the New Right’ (Rabenschlag 2020, p. 193). Indivisibly intertwining Christianity and German national identity, the picket finished with the German national anthem. It ritualised the self-narrated process of identity preservation. As Steele and Homolar (2019, p. 216) establish:

The psychological need for continuity thus becomes an entry point for a populist politics that utilizes promises to regenerate and reinforce past notions of belonging and inclusion, in particular when agents experience trauma and anxiety.

However, because trauma, anxiety and crises are dependent on their narration, the production of crises maintained the need for reassurance. The narration of the Berlin truck attack in Berlin was thus not different from previously established narratives. Similarly, to Chancellor Merkel and the Interior Minister, the New Right used the Berlin truck attack to speak as

evidence for the threat landscape they saw most suitable to carry forward identity narratives in line with their objectives.

The different links to policy narratives and long-term political objectives thus absorbed the Berlin truck attack in long-term narratives rather than that it was crucially linked to identity narratives on its own. In this way, the event was pulled apart by political objectives. Further, where the Berlin truck attack helped to substantiate existing ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around terrorist violence, political actors did not forcefully propose redescriptions of identity narrative commitments around the substantiation process.

In terms of the event’s meaning for identity narratives, the different policy narratives that political actors tied to the event produced a conflicting narration of the events and its implications for German state identity. Where conflicting narratives formed, the enactment of narratives through legislation tilted the sensemaking of the event further to substantiate policy narratives on internal security, not however linked identity narratives to these processes. The meaning of the event submerged into the policy narratives on long-term political objectives and was, therefore, unable to provide a space for the renegotiation of German identity narratives beyond the redescription of policy narratives.

More broadly, however, the Berlin truck attack was used to substantiate existing system narratives of the world in crisis, and the quantification of risk as a means for the state to tackle this uncertainty. The instrumentalisation of the event led to uncertainty about the event’s meaning for German identity narratives, while at the same time, political actors were unable to produce a coherent reading of the event. While political actors thus signalled agency in providing meaning for their existing long-term narratives, they lacked ‘creative-constitutive agency’ (Berenskoetter 2020, p. 282) in settling the event through identity narrative commitments. Further, where actors signalled agency in substantiating ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561), they failed to establish redescribed links to identity narratives in the process of substantiation.

Moreover, the narration of the threat landscape to ontological security did not match the narration of the state’s ‘purview of ... agency’ (Steele 2008a, p. 73). Where de Maizière, for example, sought to quantify and address the notion of uncontrollable risks, it was unspecified how that related to the fearless, open society Chancellor Merkel envisaged. The conflicting narration of the threat landscape thus produced anxiety that neither other narratives nor narrative enactment could alleviate.

Further to this, the Berlin truck attack was narrated as evidence for a world in crisis. The apocalyptic system narrative requires continuous substantiation through time. The narrative's substantiation needs the incorporation of events into it. With time moving forward, this is to suggest that more events will be incorporated as evidence for and substantiation of the system narrative. With more events substantiating the apocalyptic system narrative, however, it also becomes increasingly unlikely that each of these events can become a singular defining moment for the renegotiation of identity narratives. Scholars can only know in the future whether this assessment can be supported by evidence. However, as the analysis of narrative projection and reception demonstrates, it appears unlikely that the Berlin truck attack will harness the power for identity narrative negotiation in the future.

## 6.4. Narrative Projection and Reception

The narrative formation in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century media ecology happens instantaneously. Narratives are immediately projected and received, not least through various social media channels. More than before, audiences become co-producers of narrative sensemaking processes alongside media channels and political actors. Andrew Hoskins and Ben O'Loughlin (2015) have coined this media ecology 'Arrested War' (see section 6.4.1.). Political actors have to operate in and through the complex environment, and they have to use it strategically if they seek to convince audiences of their narratives. However, political actors who seek to persuade audiences in this speedy narrative cycle are also subject to increasing pressures to engage with events and audiences, and the environment and other actors urge them to react continuously and quickly.

In the analysis of narrative formation, this chapter has so far examined how political actors reacted to the event through social media channels (section 6.3.1). This subchapter will look more specifically at how media and broader audiences engaged in the process of narrative sensemaking and where they reflected and negotiated how political actors made sense of the attack. In examining these processes of contestation, this introduction caveats that more so than in previous chapters, the cycle of formation, projection and reception does not reflect a chronological order of narrative sensemaking but instead intertwines and happen co-constitutively as the Berlin truck attack co-occurs. There is little possibility for the researcher to dissect between formation, projection and reception of narratives as all merge into one complex, interactive process; the separation can only be analytical and abstract.

#### 6.4.1. The Media Environment in 2016: Narrating in the Era of Arrested War

The Berlin truck attack happened in the third phase of media ecologies (Miskimmon, O’Loughlin and Roselle 2017, p. 10), the ‘Arrested War’ (Hoskins and O’Loughlin 2015). The ‘Arrested War’ media ecology can be described as ‘a new paradigm in which professional media and ... institutions have found ways to arrest the once-chaotic social media dynamics’ (Ibid., p. 1320). The conceptualisation of ‘Arrested War’ (Ibid.) speaks in particular to an event’s temporality and the narration of its shreds of existence. Events in this reading are arrested, not to ‘[escape] unintelligibly’ (Ibid., p. 1330).

During and after the Berlin truck attack, the media ecology was profoundly different than at the time of 9/11. As political actors found means to cope with the uncertain dynamics of the post-9/11 media ecology, they established new communication strategies. The economisation of media more generally increased the pressure and speed with which traditional media outlets had to transform and adapt to a new, rapidly emerging media landscape (Schomburg, Mykhalchyshyn and Herber 2016, p. 264). As a result, many editorial processes and products moved online (Ibid.). Cost and finance models were reconsidered, and many publishers feared the death of print media (see Lundén 2008). The shifts in editorial processes and financing models also resulted in ‘reformed ... structures in the form of newsdesks and/or newsrooms’ and also meant that ‘many journalists draw on pre-produced material by others’ (Schomburg, Mykhalchyshyn and Herber 2016, p. 265, translated by author).

The increasing need for speedy dissemination of material has consequences for the narrative cycle. If newsrooms are more likely to draw on pre-produced material, they are also more likely to draw on previously established narrative patterns. The economisation of print media facilitated the dissemination of quick, not necessarily well-researched content and the dynamic added to the urgency and speed with which information circulates. It also impacted the formation of narratives around the Berlin truck attack. Urgency more likely required the reproduction of pre-produced material, yet the ‘drive for instantaneity in news reporting fills news stories with intensity, but rarely with substance’ (Papacharissi, 2016, p. 309).

As suggested in section 6.4.3., when responses to terrorist attacks become part of a commemorative ritual and if media and social media responses produce rituals that rely on pre-narrated patterns, then communicative reactions to terrorist events can help trigger existing ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around terrorist violence. As a result, ‘[n]arratives of solidarity, peace and love ... are not entirely

spontaneous' (Eroukhmanoff 2019, p. 176) and begin to consolidate 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) through affective engagement.

When narratives of audiences and media are not 'entirely spontaneous' (Eroukhmanoff 2019, p. 176), it is also easier for political actors to take into account and draw on previous emotively anchored responses to terrorist violence. In turn, responses to terrorist violence form part of how political actors seek to work through media structures to project narratives, as, for example, seen by Merkel's pre-mediation of the narrative landscape and attempts to evoke solidarity. As media and political actors used the possibilities of the media ecology increasingly, they also provided more platforms to 'invite affective attunement, support affective investment and propagate affectively charged expression' (Papacharissi 2016, p. 309). In doing so, 'they do lend emerging publics their own distinct mediality' (Ibid.).

Media and mass media engagement have thus further driven the dynamic of affective publics (see Papacharissi 2015; 2016), through which 'both the nature of "media" and "events" are being rethought in the era of digital technologies and global news flows' (Parry 2019, p. 229). Affective publics (see Papacharissi 2016) draw on structures of storytelling or templates (Hoskins, 2006) that guide the sensemaking of events. In the words of O'Loughlin (2019, p. 2), they provide 'a set of assumptions about the nature of antagonism, momentum'. Hashtags and engagement by audiences on social media further 'serve as framing devices that allow crowds to be rendered into publics; networked publics that want to tell their story collaboratively and on their own terms' (Papacharissi 2016, p. 308).

For understanding the Berlin truck attack, the constitution of the public mattered decisively. As the Berlin truck attack occurred, affective audiences engaged with and commented on the event as soon as the news of the attacks surfaced. The developments constituted a core logic of the sensemaking of the Berlin truck attack and how political actors and the public interacted and engaged with the narrative cycle. Because speed, as suggested, increased narrativity and not necessarily substance and because mainstream media can arrest the diffuse logic of emerging participatory means, the sensemaking of the Berlin truck attack amplified the sensemaking through readily available narrative patterns.

However, users have also found inventive and altered ways of engaging with such ritualistic patterns (Burnap and Williams 2016); audiences and the media can question them. Hashtags initially meeting the expected ritualisation, might be re-appropriated by counter-movements that seek to redescribe the meaning of a hashtag. When audiences question ritualised narrative patterns more accessibly they can also produce mediality through in the process.

To summarise, the interaction of a variety of phenomenon has produced a complex media ecology, however, still, driven in part by traditional patterns and dynamics. The complexity of the media ecology constituted the environment through which Merkel's government had to operate narrative sensemaking during, after, and of the Berlin truck attack. This environment is highly complex, and ultimately, 'multi-directional and fuzzy' (O'Loughlin et al. 2017, p. 181).

The 21<sup>st</sup>-century media ecology is thus a crucial element of, and takes a decisive part in, shaping terrorist events and their responses to them. By re-creating similar affectively charged responses to terrorist events – akin to reactive ritualistic patterns – specific modes of affective engagement form an essential part of 'discursive anchor[ing]' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) processes. However, as this chapter will show in the subsequent sections, the substantiation of such emotive or affective anchors may – rather than producing solidarity and identification with identity narrative negotiation – render the identity negotiation process "empty".

#### 6.4.2. Negotiating Emotions between "Fear!" and "Do Not Be Afraid".

TV channels picked up the news of the events relatively quickly, although both German public broadcasters *Das Erste* (ARD) and *Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen* (ZDF) interrupted their scheduled programme after, for example, CNN already started interviewing witnesses (Becker 2016, translated by author). ARD interrupted its scheduled programme at 21:15 and ZDF at 21:45 (Ibid.). ZDF director Thomas Bellut (in Ibid.) argued that ZDF 'decided to collect facts first and get a picture of the situation before interrupting the program'. The ARD's Programme Directorate (Ibid.) stated further that 'serious and consolidated information will always go before speed'. While ARD and ZDF thus both committed to waiting until more information came to light, their news specials indicated that they did not take the commitment fully to heart.

During the 21:15 *Tagesthemen* of the ARD, reporters attempted to describe the current state of information by continuously emphasising that it was not yet clear as to whether the incident at the Breitscheidplatz was an attack and that it was too early to give a determinative assessment as to the intentions of the driver – six times in the first five minutes alone (see ARD 2016, 21:15:38; 21:18:23; 21:18:33; 21:19:20; 21:19:38; 21:20:25). Crucially however the special issue of *Tagesthemen* (ARD 2016) contributed in an exemplary manner to substantiating 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) of Islamist extremist terrorist violence, despite the ardent emphasis on the fact that it was too early to tell.

10 and 35 minutes into the special issue, *Tagesthemen* (Ibid., 21:25:43; 21:50:53) showed a selective five-minute feature summary of terrorist cases in Europe between 2011 and 2015, all of which but one, referenced terrorist attacks with an Islamist extremist background.

Further, the news anchor Ingo Zamperoni continuously repeated that ‘it was too early to say but that it looked like an attack’ and that ‘so far Germany had been spared but that it appeared Germany might have now been the target’ (see ARD 2016, 21:25:40; 21:50:49, translated by author). Zamperoni – while arguing it was too early – therefore continued to activate and reiterate narrative elements of ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) of Islamist extremist attacks without knowing whether the event was an attack committed with an Islamist extremist ideological background. Likewise, the five-minute “summary” of terrorist attacks in Europe was a practice of ‘discursive anchor[ing]’ (Ibid.) whereby the Berlin truck attack was woven into a seemingly objective storyline of Islamist extremist terrorist events while excluding alternative events of terrorist violence in Europe more broadly.

As most information was not yet confirmed at the time newspapers went to press the next day, print newspapers sought to report on the events without providing a clear indication as to the nature of the attacks. *B.Z.* (2016b, translated by author) headlined its front cover on December 20, 2016, with ‘Our Heart!’. *Bild* (2016, translated by author) wrote: ‘9 dead! Van crashes into Christmas Market’ +++ blood bath in Berlin +++ suspected terror! +++ more than 50 injured +++ driver arrested, co-driver dead +++ state attorney investigates’. Some of the information *Bild* stated on its cover on December 20, 2016, were later disproven, including that the driver had been arrested. *Der Tagesspiegel* (2016, translated by author) stated: ‘Terror fears in Berlin’, and *FAZ* (2016, translated by author) and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (2016, translated by author) both titled their cover pages similarly with ‘van races into crowd on Berlin Christmas Market’ and ‘van races into Berlin Christmas Market’ respectively.

With – unsurprising – exception of the tabloid *Bild*, and *Der Tagesspiegel*, print newspaper thus initially held back with headlines that sought to definitely determine the incident on Breitscheidplatz as a terror attack, not least where information on the nature of the attack had not been confirmed at the time, the newspapers went to press. However, what does stand out is the attention to the spatial significance of the Christmas Market, rather than that the incident occurred on Breitscheidplatz. The symbolism attached to the Christmas Market – in close reference to Christianity and Christmas – played a crucial role in the immediate and later sensemaking of the event.

Print newspapers covered the Berlin truck attack and the terrorist nature of the event more extensively on December 21, 2016, not only dealing with a ‘reconstruction of the events’ (Rabenschlag 2020, p. 183) but also ‘reactions of eyewitnesses, relatives [of] victims and the citizens of Berlin’. Dominant emotional responses were ‘shock, fear and grief’ (Ibid.). However, also from early on, ritualistic evocations of Christianity and the Bible strongly informed narrative sensemaking processes. *Der Spiegel* (2016b, translated by author) wrote ‘Silent Night. Christmas in times of terror’ and the *Berliner Morgenpost* (2016, translated by author) headlined its newspaper on December 21, 2016, by citing Luke 2:10: ‘Do not be afraid’. In an interview with the priest of the Gedächtniskirche – close by where the attack had occurred and since 1945, a symbol for peace – *Bild* (Link and Solms-Laubach 2016, translated by author) wrote: ‘Only God can forgive this’. The theme of Christianity featured dominantly in the tabloid *Bild* (Ibid.), which argued that ‘Christmas Markets have been considered terrorists’ “desired targets” for years’. *Der Tagesspiegel* (Matthies 2016, translated by author) concluded, ‘that the perpetrator did not only have a viciously perfected plan but a feel for the most vulnerable spots of the society that is influenced by Christian Western values’.

Christianity, as a recurring theme, already played a role around the narration of 9/11, especially through narratives that prescribed a clash of cultures between Christian values of the “West” and Islam (see Chapter 5). In this way, the ‘othering bias’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 574) in the process of ‘discursively anchor[ing]’ (Ibid., p. 561) characteristic features of terrorist violence was substantiated through the narration around the Berlin truck attack.

Where the *Other* served to substantiate threat and insecurity, media outlets and their focus on emotions the day after the attack was, therefore, also a powerful means to contribute to a ‘cycle of insecurity’ (O’Loughlin et al. 2017). However, some media outlets also soon began to question their role in the production of the ‘cycle of insecurity’ (Ibid.) and asked whether they were not inadvertently contributing to terror’s success. The *FAZ* (Michels and Hanfeld 2016, translated by author), for example, asked on December 21, 2016: ‘Who sows the fear?’ and critically assessed the antagonistic headlines “Fear!” (“Angst!”) of *Bild* and “Do not be afraid” of *Berliner Morgenpost* (“Fürchtet Euch Nicht”) both from the day after the attack. Further to this, some of the capital’s media outlets questioned whether fear was indeed the overriding emotion in the aftermath of the Berlin attacks. As Marvin Schade (2016, translated by author), critically examines:

Irrespective of whether fear is a dominant feeling or not, it also is about the effects a headline has on the public mood. The power of *Bild* with a readership in the millions cannot be underestimated. [*Bild*] not only describes feelings and a mood, but it also produces it.

The active engagement of readers contributed to the media's self-evaluation. Users on Twitter, for example, were not willing to buy into the description of “*Angst!*” as their dominant feeling: ‘Every child knows that you cannot buy happiness. Fear, however, you can buy for 90 cents at a kiosk’ (@mamkaufmann in Schade 2016, translated by author). *Cicero* writer Bastian Brauns (2016, translated by author) said, ‘Berlin after terror? Maximally unimpressed. #Breitscheidplatz’ together with a photo stepping on the *Bild* newspaper of December 21, 2016. Similarly, *Der Tagesspiegel* (Matthies 2016, translated by author) argued that Berlin ‘kept its countenance’, that terror ‘had chosen the wrong one’ and that ‘this city, that our city, reveals its strength in catastrophes’, which was a means negotiate the dominant feeling and mood after the attack. The resistance to fear further aided the production of “we-ness” where ‘the ritual work around the mourning practices is anything but neutral in its construction of consensus’ (Sumiala and Räisä 2020, p. 433).

The notion of resistance and resoluteness that social media channels reflected on, mirrored an additional theme in some of the news media, which questioned the “normality” of terror and the inclusion of the attacks into broader narratives of crises and uncertainty. In this way, some media outlets reflected Merkel’s apocalypse narrative, which also engaged in broader themes of modernity. Some proponents of Chancellor Merkel’s open society narrative focused on the contextualisation of the Berlin attacks through global acts of violence and global, competing crises. Carolin Emcke (2016, translated by author), for example, noted:

The pain about diverse political shocks dry our throats, and yet they need to be moulded into words: the miserable death in Syria or the Mediterranean Sea, the brutal conflict in Yemen or the conditions in Turkey, the dismal elections in the United States or the momentous referendum in Great Britain – and now the attack in the heart of Berlin. Hatred and violence are no longer elsewhere; no longer do they affect only others. They are literally creeping up on our bodies.

Carolin Emcke sketched out pain as the global mood: An affected world society had to live through the pain of Berlin, as much as the pain of previous shocks and terrorist attacks. Emcke’s (Ibid.) position further proposed the acceptance of normality through engaging in agentic defiance, similar to the resoluteness that some newspapers attested to the city of Berlin. ‘Living with terrorism has become normality’ wrote Christiane Hoffmann (2016, translated by author) of *Der Spiegel*. Schade (2016, translated by author) responded that ‘one is sadly tempted to agree. People, so it seems, have accepted terrorism; even when it happens in front of our doorstep. ... Society reacts with the calmness and routine, propagated by politicians and the media’. In all three cases, the attestation of normality denied the rupture of

the Berlin truck attack to the fabric of life, notwithstanding sadness and pain. Some media outlets facilitated the denial of rupture by incorporating the event into a series of competing crises and terrifying events, such as, for example, Emcke (2016, translated by author). Merkel's narrative formation of continuity and stability, therefore, found resonance in some media outlets through narratives of "normalcy" and "normality" of terrorist violence and domestic and international crises more generally.

At the same time, as narratives of continuity and normality emerged, some media outlets also aimed to emphasise the significance of the event for Chancellor Merkel's open society narrative, as well as for questions to German identity more broadly. Some outlets also questioned and negotiated the notion of normality. The day after the attacks, *Der Tagesspiegel* (Carsdorff 2016, translated by author), for example, wrote:

She knows it. Angela Merkel knows of the effect of what happened in Berlin on [Germany's] externally projected image, but also on a deeply unsettled Republic. [A Republic] that just about appeared to be able to cope, that began to believe the words of the Chancellor, to follow her, tentatively, but pronouncedly ... that what lay ahead for the country was manageable. [That] [t]he integration of foreigners and, even more, foreignness [was possible]. And now this ... It hits the capital, straight into the heart.

Where journalists asked about the significance of the event for German identity narratives, particularly in the context of the refugee crisis, they also tended to question narratives of normality. The negotiation of identity, thus, was closely linked to the production of discontinuity. In some cases, the notion of discontinuity also served to substantiate calls for the renegotiation of the state's role in protecting the public and thus reflected on de Maizière's narration of proposed security legislation.

For example, Giovanni di Lorenzo and Heinrich Wefing (2016, translated by author) of the newspaper *DIE ZEIT* – rather than for example, wars that occurred elsewhere – focused on logically binding the New Year's Eve events in Cologne to the Berlin truck attack, to argue for a strong state that can defend itself.

To date, there are politicians, and not only politicians, that have still not recognised how deeply the sense of justice had been insulted by the lawlessness and the trivialisation during and after Cologne's New Year's Eve. The fight against terror that is against the imagined and real threat is even more critical. The Amri case shows: We have delegated the fight to an unmanageable number of agencies, courts, investigators and Länder governments.

*DIE ZEIT* authors reflected on a broader theme on the state's ignorance, lack of empathy and lack of understanding, especially when the bureaucratic handling of the victims began to emerge as a dominant focus. The notion of the weak state that had failed to prevent the attack associated closely with the bureaucratic and heartless depiction of the state personified by Chancellor Merkel's 'lack of empathy' (Schmoll 2017, translated by author).

The understanding of the state's lack of empathy found its personified counterpart in Chancellor Merkel. In this view, Chancellor Merkel personified heartless bureaucracy in the light of human suffering (see Strittmatter 2017; Haak 2018; Steiniger 2017). At the same time, the state's bureaucracy had failed the people, because it could not prevent human suffering. The accusations tied to a particular role conception of the state (Geiger 2017) and one that leading government actors had paradoxically also forged through the construction of state responsibility and the concept of internal security (see section 6.3.2.).

To be sure, security agencies had monitored Anis Amri for some time, and he was the subject of discussions on several occasions in the Joint Counter-Terrorism Centre (GTAZ). Amri had gone unnoticed by many of the *Länder* governments and used multiple identities to register and re-register in different parts of Germany. The failure of the GTAZ and the failure of communication between security agencies on the *Länder* and Federal level was indeed striking. Special committees are still underway to provide clarification where which decisions indicated state failure. As the final report of the Berlin Senate (Jost 2017, p. 68, translated by author) on the Anis Amri case stated: 'There were mistakes, negligence, irregularities or organisational and structural deficiencies in varying degrees in almost areas', which suggested that the bureaucratic system had not dealt with Amri's case correctly. However, the report also admitted that 'none of the reported insufficiencies, mistakes and negligence ... allow for a certainty that the absence of these mistakes ... could have prevented the attacks on December 19, 2016' (Ibid.).

The underlying accusations that the state had failed both to protect its citizens from the attack and in lacking empathy with the victims and relatives were in part a product of the narrated role of state responsibility, particularly fostered by de Maizière. Only where media and audiences saw the state to carry the responsibility for an empathetic response and for preventing such attacks, were they able to make narratives of state failure credible. The narrated 'purview of ... agency' (Steele 2008a, p. 73) was thus also a product of narratives by political actors. It follows that the narration and realisation of an increasing scope of action and expansion of capabilities – some of which severely infringe upon civil liberties – come at the price of increasing a likelihood to be held accountable for when these responsibilities appear to have been disappointed. The dynamic between narratives of state responsibility and accountability are particularly important in the context of narratives on the responsibility to prevent terrorist attacks, as put forward by de Maizière. The quantification of risk as substantiated through and personified in the role of the *Gefährder*, thus not only enabled political actors' scope of action but also appears to have expanded the scope of accountability.

### 6.4.3. Ritualised Sense-Making, the Lack of Meaning and the Search for Words

Where Chancellor Merkel and the government more broadly intended to provide reassurances, it appeared that the projection narratives did not achieve their intended objectives. Alongside the revelations on bureaucratic mistakes in the lead-up to the attack, two themes became increasingly intertwined: the lack of empathy and ritualised meaning-making on part of the political actors and state failure in the treatment of victims. These themes attested to a lack of narrative alignment and spoke to the difficulties for political actors to project a coherent narrative of the attack. Initially, the projection focused on ritualistic responses by Chancellor Merkel and her government. The projection later translated into criticism of Chancellor Merkel's lack of empathy and poor handling of the victims of the attack. Only two days after the attack, *Cicero* (Adam 2016, translated by author) wrote: 'Even though every citizen searches for orientation, self-assurance and confidence, the Chancellor provides empty phrases instead of answers'. Likewise, Gabor Steingart (2016, translated by author) of the *Handelsblatt* wrote: 'All politicians have spoken, and no one said a thing'. *Der Tagesspiegel* (Thiele 2017, translated by author) described a 'roaring silence'. Stephan Winterbauer (2016, translated by author), commenting on Chancellor Merkel's speech of 20 December 2016, stated: 'Especially, the Chancellor's words are of shocking expectability ... Dismay-text-modules read from the sheet of paper of the rhetoric of grief ... Politicians cannot find language aside from ready-made rituals of commemoration to counter the terror'.

The notion of ritualistic responses is worth unpacking in more detail because it speaks to the conditions of the media environment and to how 'perspicuous instances' (Jalbert 1999, p. 41) can demonstrate how some media outlets negotiated a broader lack of meaning around the Berlin truck attack. The failure to provide a coherent meaning, beyond "empty" rituals, also spoke to instances of a broader failure of narrative identification. In line with the contention of this thesis, the instances of failure are striking because it expands on the argument that for narratives to provide meaning, audiences need to be able to identify with these narratives. Even where in theory, audiences voiced a need for unity, values and "we-ness" and even where Merkel, for example, reflected on this need, her narratives seemed unable to satisfy the demand.

From the moment of the attack, the public engaged in and interacted with the narrative cycle through social media and was, therefore, an integral part of it. More generally, the public reacted with a mix of emotions and based on a variety of beliefs and ideological backgrounds. Immediately after the attack, Islamophobic, racist, and populist tweets and Facebook posts surged (see Fielitz et al. 2018, p. 5). At the same time, expressions of

solidarity and calls for unity, peace, tolerance, compassion and sadness outnumbered the calls for hatred (Ibid., p. 6). Most commonly referenced hashtags such as #PrayforBerlin and #IchbineinBerliner expressed solidarity far beyond national audiences (see Baumann 2016).

Further to this, icons and images substantiated the meaning-making and expression of solidarity through these hashtags (see Rieke 2016). Both hashtags expanded the affective engagement not only through their extensive use and dissemination, but also because they referenced emotionally charged events: The hashtag #PrayforBerlin mirrored the hashtag #PrayforParis, most commonly referenced in response to the Paris terror attacks of 2013. *Ich bin ein Berliner*, quoted the famous words uttered by US President John F. Kennedy against the political backdrop of the Berlin Wall. Kennedy's speech had been an expression of US solidarity with West Berlin in support of German unification and a proclamation of freedom (see Eichhoff 1993). The hashtag #IchbineinBerliner resonated not only with harnessing the spirit of Berlin as a free city but also with calls for German unity.

In researching on the visual element of such sensemaking processes, Eroukhmanoff (2019, p. 172) argues that tweets and memes that reference *Ich bin ein Berliner*, 'denote a sense of loyalty to subjects who are considered victims of injustice', at the same time at which, significant symbols and icons can regain meaning through contextualisation 'when mobilising iconic signifiers' (Ibid.). In this way, hashtags, memes, symbols, icons, for example, *Ich bin ein Berliner* but also the Brandenburg Gate lit in the colours of the German flag, all 'constitute tangible artefacts that become owned by everyday citizens and are central to how communities of mourning organise' (Ibid., p. 174). However, 'when taking ownership' of 'artefacts', 'that seek to resist terrorism and propagating them, everyday actors also do the work of the state by coinciding with the state agenda in counterterrorism and framing responses to terrorism as peaceful and loving' (Ibid.).

In the context of the Berlin truck attack, Eroukhmanoff's argument can be supported in so far as audiences also carried the calls for love, peace and solidarity as a reaction to the Berlin truck attacks and thus mirrored Merkel's sensemaking and that of many other political actors. However, the concurring use of the calls for love, solidarity and peace did not indicate that Merkel's narrative had been successful in providing meaning or creating a feeling of solidarity, love and peace around the community of mourning or for German state identity narratives. Camille Riquier's (2018, pp. 19-20, translated by author) examination of the link between identity and #PrayforParis corresponds with the response to the Berlin truck attack:

As if it was not enough, Facebook offered the possibility to highlight users' profile pictures in blue-white-red flags ... [These signs] ... multiplied the signs of rallying as if they sought to compensate for a feeling of unity which we felt was lacking at the base. There were too

many symbols, too much encouragement, too many phrases to enhance national unity truly. As often, it sought to counterbalance a defect, to bridge a gap: a gap that separates the real France and a France that is imagined.

Riquier (Ibid.) raises the question of whether affective communities created through ritualistic expressions of solidarity, forge unity or, instead, whether they express a longing for an ‘imagined community’ (Anderson 1991). To be sure, affective rituals ‘tell us what solidarity, peace and love look like in the context of terrorism’ (Eroukhmanoff 2019, p. 171) and are therefore a substantial part of seeking to foster and forge a feeling of “we-ness” around collective suffering and by producing ‘affective communities’ (Hutchison 2016).

However, the initial reactions to the Berlin truck attack also raised a similar question to that asked by Riquier (2018), especially in reflection of narrative formation and projection. Eroukhmanoff (2019, p. 167, italics in original) argues in this context that ‘by propagating iconic representations of solidarity, peace and love’, memes, hashtags, social media, political and media rituals, ‘[attend] the logic of the sensational and the cliché and thereby [fall] short of contesting terrorism through *sensing* peace, love and solidarity’. This chapter argues that the lack of ‘sensing’ (Ibid.) during the Berlin truck attack, created an idea of longing for the meaning of the Berlin truck attack, which media outlets and social media responses correspondingly indicated in the ‘perspicuous instances’ (Jalbert 1999, p. 41) presented here.

In responding to what the attack meant for German identity narratives, some people took part in imagining what it should. Through affective engagement, they imagined and portrayed competing visions of German identity; visions co-produced through affective engagement, but that also revealed the gaps and shortcomings to achieving it. Steingart (2016, translated by author) of the *Handelsblatt*, spoke in this context of the Germans’ ‘Place of Longing’. The ‘Germans’ place of longing’, he declared,

is currently windy. The winds of globalisation are sweeping over its roof. From the Christmas Market emerges the smell of corpses. Frost flowers are growing around the hearts of its inhabitants. Angela Merkel does not command herself as the good shepherd...Instead of new ways out, she offers no alternatives. Globalisation produces inequality, and we are supposed to deal with it. Daily terror is sold as part of the new normality. The Black-Red-Yellow Brandenburg Gate aims to convince us to acknowledge powerlessness as a political fact. There is no external security any longer, only courage. Those who do not walk across the closest Christmas Market with their heads held high, betray the Western values.

(Ibid.)

Steingart (Ibid.) contextualised Chancellor Merkel’s narrative and questioned whether unity and stability were able to provide the solution to carry her narrative and German identity forward. Steingart (Ibid.) narrated the ‘place of longing’, akin to a ghostly house in which German identity had become similarly unfathomable. The home of German identity, he

described as uninhabitable. In equidistance to the lost past and an unimaginable future, the house of longing described a country, in which identity was homeless and searched for a place. Chancellor Merkel, as went the narrative, was not able to help, provide guidance or lead this search for identity. Further, Steingart's article paradoxically created longing because it suggested that there was an identity narrative that could fit competing visions of identity. It suggested that there was a possibility for a determinative reading of the event for German identity narratives. On the occasion of the annual commemoration of the attacks on December 23, 2017, Alexander Kissler (2017, translated by author) of *Cicero*, similarly, questioned:

An official commemoration that deserves its name could not leave it at the cloudy, empty phrases of togetherness, community and reconciliation. It would have to overcome the vapid talk in media and politics, which bend an Islamist attack into a "tragedy". A communal commemoration would have to find a language that names the intricate web of a causal relationship, without drifting into polemic: People were murdered because fanatical Muslims see in it an act of service to God.

Similar to Steingart, Kissler reflected on an unmet longing for a community 'that was not allowed to exist' (Ibid.) because a lack of appropriate language had made its identification impossible. Both Steingart and Kissler, although less outspoken than populist rhetoric, insinuated the possibility of a German community that could find "we-ness" only if political actors truly acknowledged and expressed what had happened.

In suggesting that political actors were hiding a truth, both media outlets used a theme common to populist rhetoric. In this way, they cautiously suggested that the political establishment was not brave enough to face the facts and that only reckoning with the harsh truth helped the community and the commemoration of victims. However, the expression of longing forged this community simultaneously by describing it as a final destination of this truth. At the same time, the expression of longing co-produced the longing by suggesting the possibility of such a final destination. To be sure, media outlets differed decidedly in terms of their ideological background, political objectives and of course, not all media outlets argued a case for the notion of longing. However, where *Handelsblatt* and *Cicero* questioned the meaning of the Berlin truck attack for German identity narratives, they highlighted that the ritualistic practices of solidarity – which intended to foster a sense of community – were not entirely successful in doing so. More generally both media reflected on 'perspicuous instances' (Jalbert 1999, p. 41), 'intersecting in ways that exemplify and point towards regularities' (Hoskins and O'Loughlin 2007, p. 6) or broader trends. In the case of *Handelsblatt* and *Cicero*, the identification of such instances demonstrates how, if ritualistic practices do not provide sensemaking, media actors can express the unmet need for meaning, for example by narrating longing.

Another way to express longing in the conflicting narrative formation process, in which no apparent narrative authority provided identifiable meaning, was to turn to Chancellor Schmidt. His speech on the eve of the Schleyer kidnapping (Chapter 4) became a viral success shortly after the Berlin truck attack. The viral success of Chancellor Schmidt's address to Red Army Faction (RAF) terrorists spoke to a longing for narrative authority and clarity: 'Merkel says similar things. However, it is Schmidt's style ... which makes the difference' (Schmoll 2017, translated by author). Where Chancellor Merkel sought to unify the open society, and disengaged from debates on domestic security legislation, it also appeared that she was now accused of having insufficiently engaged with the grief of victims and society more broadly. The longing for narrative authority further pointed to the particular position of the Chancellor and expectations directed at the Chancellor's role after a terrorist attack.

The disappointed expectations likely evoked a longing for and romanticisation of narrative leadership (Ibid.). It was mostly the human aspect that the media outlets which longed for Schmidt, critically reflected on, such as the handling of victims and survivors, the lack of care, the bureaucratic response to human suffering. The yearning for the human aspect is, in part, a product of the enactment of the internal security narrative. Chancellor Schmidt became the embodiment of that longing and that humanisation, i.e. the 'virtuous Chancellor' (Winterbauer 2016, translated by author). The *story* of Chancellor Schmidt's leadership had been remembered through time and manifested itself in socio-cultural memory.

Where Twitter users, for example, reminisced about Chancellor Schmidt's leadership, they did so almost exclusively to criticise Chancellor Merkel. Chief editor of the *Berliner Zeitung*, Jochen Arntz (2016, translated by author) tweeted: 'September 16, 1977. Different time. This country'. His tweet was published together with a screenshot of the *Bild* cover of September 16, 1977, headlined by Chancellor Schmidt's statement: "We will win over terrorism". *DIE ZEIT* (Di Lorenzo and Wefing 2016, translated by author) commented:

All of this is not about jurisdiction and law, and ritualised party-political uses of language should not taint all of this. It is bigger, which is why the attack on Berlin constituted an attack on our self-understanding: This is about people's belief that our open, free and tolerant society can defend itself; that it does not only set rules but is willing to enforce them; a belief that we generally apply one principle: that the more diverse our society, the stricter our rules ... No one needs to speak like Helmut Schmidt but how we long for a similarly convincing declaration by the Chancellor today.

Four hundred sixty-five people responded to the article, some with comments which the *DIE ZEIT* later deleted. Where users and the media emphasised Chancellor Schmidt's authority, it often linked to a disagreement with the government of 2016: 'Contrary to our current political

leaders, Helmut Schmidt spoke clearly and acted this way. The strong state was permanently present in every-day life. I am missing a cross-party consensus ... how about clarity again?' (Friendofneil#26 in Di Lorenzo and Wefing 2016, translated by author). Helmut Schmidt's speech was shared and viewed in multiple versions on YouTube and two versions of the speech reached over 100,000 views two days after the attack (see Schweidler 2016).

Media and audiences – by a variety of means – more broadly questioned which feelings could provide unity. It was unclear how feelings of fear related to unity and whether resoluteness provided a solution to the terrorist threat. It was further unclear, who had been the target and which community was to be unified through solidarity. Therefore, ritualistic media practices might instead be 'more productively conceptualized as an identifiable and variegated class of performative media enactments in which solidarities are summoned, and moral ideas of the "social good" are unleashed and exert agency in the public life of societies' (Cottle 2006, p. 411). Following this argument, the projection of narratives in media and on social media was, therefore, as conflicted and conflicting, as the narratives, they sought to project. Further to this, the negotiation of identity was characterised by a sense of loss and by political actors failing to provide a coherent reading of the event for Germany's identity narrative.

The complex interaction of narratives and enactment led to an indeterminate reading of the attacks and their implication for German society and German identity narratives more broadly. They engaged in rituals that stabilised existing anchors of 'emotional knowledge' (Eroukhmanoff 2019, p. 176) or emotional anchors and 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561). If anything, the attack had evidenced the search for an identity narrative, a longing not fulfilled by leading political actors. Despite assurances, ritualistic commemoration and calls for solidarity, it appeared, that the projection of narratives led to the obfuscation of meaning and rendered the sense of meaning for German identity narrative negotiation unintelligible.

To be sure, this section did not present the findings of a systematic review of all German media responses following the Berlin truck attack and instead looked for 'perspicuous instances' (Jalbert 1999, p. 41) that reflected on how political actors sought to project narratives and how they travelled through the media landscape. In the speedy media cycle of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century media ecology, however, it remains to be stated that differentiation between elements of the narrative cycle is almost impossible unless deployed for an abstract analytical value, as in this thesis.

## 6.5. Contextualising Anxiety, Temporality, Agency and Identity Narratives

### 6.5.1. Anxiety

Anxiety around the Berlin truck attack was evidenced in the data and strategically expressed and projected into the media environment by political actors in four ways: (1) systemic anxiety around the state of the world, the international order and the EU in crisis dominantly forged by Chancellor Merkel; (2) anxiety around the potentiality of risk of the *Gefährder* group and the uncertainty of terrorism's threat potential, dominantly forged by de Maizière and Maas; (3) existential anxiety around the stability of German identity either on the basis of democratic values and social cohesion (Merkel as well as multiple governmental actors) or based on anxiety around loss through the 'performance' (Moffitt 2016, p. 119) of populist politics through crisis (Gauland and Petry); (4) discussions around anxiety, emotions and whether fear, for example, constituted the appropriate emotional response to the Berlin truck attack.

Both the anxiety around the potential risk as narrated through the threat landscape and existential anxieties around German identity helped to engage themes commonly found in populist rhetoric. They also helped to create narratives of longing and thus engendered notions of 'fantasy' (Browning 2019) in some media responses and projections. Both Merkel's narration of international disorder by means of the apocalypse narrative and the AfD's narrations around the crisis of the "West", enabled actors to express anxiety through strategic system narratives and thus conjured a broader image of crises. By forming and projecting the prominence of these crises – also by means of 'emplotting' (White 1997, p. 392) the Berlin truck into these narratives – the attack decreased its purchase of event "singularity" and, therefore, also its power for identity narrative negotiation.

### 6.5.2. Temporality

Temporality played a role in the negotiation of rupture and normality in the light of a series of events that political actors sought to tie to the event. In the process of incorporating the event into a series, or, in reference to other events, political actors sought to establish different timelines around the significance of the events. Most dominantly, the Berlin truck attack was understood in the context of a series of terrorist events with an Islamist extremist background. However, some actors also attempted to alter the referential frame for the sensemaking of the

Berlin truck attack. For example, Berlin's mayor Michael Müller referenced the far-right-terror attack in Norway.

However, the establishment of temporal scopes played a most dominant role in close relation to the analytical marker of anxiety whereby the systemic crises and uncertainties were embedded in a reading of "times of uncertainty" or "times of crises". The intensity of these disturbances was juxtaposed to the timeless state and further, projected the timeless state into the future.

The narrative link between future and spatial relationships was also an important theme, especially when narratives that were projected instead, lead to descriptions of longing. Longing here served to describe a feeling of present-tense loss (for example in the AfD's narration or as reflected by some media outlets) of control and identity; a yearning for a past identity and uncertainty about the future of identity. Similarly, while closely linked to 'fantasies' (Browning 2019) and populist rhetoric, Merkel and governmental actors also sought to underline the significance of a loss of control, albeit differently. Whereas Chancellor Merkel attempted to juxtapose the apocalypse narrative through 'emotional governance' (Eroukhmanoff 2019, p. 169) of values such as solidarity, the open society and unity, de Maizière, for example, sought to regain control through quantifying risks.

Temporality further played a role in the enactment of narratives, for example, by proposing sea-changes to Germany's security architecture and by arguing that while Germany's decentralised system had served the country well, it was no longer appropriate in "times like this". In proposing changes to Germany's security architecture, political actors such as Heiko Maas, de Maizière and others, developed a storyline around the changing parameters of the concept of internal security.

Temporality also mattered within the framework of the media ecology, where the need to instantaneously react to and engage with an event puts ritualistic practices in place, such as the immediate reaction by German policymakers on social media channels. In contributing to the establishment of emotional as well as ritualistic anchors, policymakers worked through the urgency of the media landscape, but also aid in setting guidelines of governance emotionally and ritualistically, which prescribe behaviours around and reaction to terrorist attacks.

### 6.5.3. Agency

The Berlin truck attack is the first empirical chapter in this thesis, where it was difficult to find evidence for 'creative-constitutive agency' (Berenskoetter 2020, p. 282). It is further the

first empirical case, where it was difficult to find an active movement of narrative structures through the redescription of identity narrative structures. The difficulty in tracing evidence for ‘creative-constitutive agency’ (Ibid.) or redescriptive movement narratives also speaks to the lack of identity narrative negotiation around the Berlin truck attack. While de Maizière’s engagement on policy narratives around the *Gefährder* group drew, at least in part, on a redescription of policies, he did not exclusively tie these policy objectives to the Berlin truck attack. Instead, the Berlin truck attack served to substantiate longer-held policy objectives and long-term identity narratives either by means of suggested reiteration (Chancellor Merkel) or restoration (AfD). Moreover, the lack of redescriptive or ‘creative-constitutive agency’ (Ibid.) points to a lack of political actors who sought to engage new ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around the Berlin truck attack, despite Merkel’s and Berlin mayor Müller’s attempts not to activate anchors around political notions of the “West”. In doing so, however, they were firstly circumvented by other governmental actors (for example Hermann, CSU), or by how the government legislatively enacted narratives on the *Gefährder* group.

While there is little evidence for ‘creative-constitutive agency’ (Berenskoetter 2020, p. 282) or redescriptive moment narratives, it remains important to note that the active substantiation of existing ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) is likewise a process that points to agency. The substantiation of ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) is part of their compelling character and reveals how understandings of terrorist violence, or event groups more broadly, come to be accepted as common-sense.

#### 6.5.4. Identity Narratives, Identity Narrative Negotiation and Discursive Anchoring

While previous empirical chapters have suggested that the recognition of ruptures helps to set new ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) by constructing “newness” around violent events, the findings in this chapter suggest that where the recognition of rupture is absent, silenced or unclear, the ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) appear not to be set “new” but rather facilitate the substantiation of previously-set anchors. By drawing on previously set characteristic features of what constituted terrorist violence and ‘when these markers are used so regularly’, ‘they form an integral part in the social mechanism that primes processes of sensemaking in this direction’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 575).

In one way, criticism of and links to Merkel's refugee policies together with a recurring theme of Christianity and religion (see section 6.4.2.) thus confirmed previously set 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around Islamist-extremist violence and did not settle a determinative reading around the event as distinctly "new". The event, as is the contention here, also lacked the power for political actors to negotiate identity narratives around new 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.) in a way that did not submerge the event into previously linked identity narrative negotiations. Despite the substantiation of existing 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.) around terrorist violence, political actors also attempted to link the event to long-term political objectives and identity narratives. In doing so, the event's meaning for German identity narratives was pulled apart by the conflicting and complex interaction of short-term narrations and long-term narratives, especially where the event was used to substantiate reasons for previously established policy objectives.

To be sure, the event happened in 2016. In line with the argument made in this thesis, events travel and are made to travel through time. Agents can forge new, or substantiate the existing meanings, of an event. Agents can seek to settle new 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.) or can seek to substantiate existing ones around these events. Whereas the previous chapters were able to shine a light on these substantiation processes, this is not possible in this chapter; the timeline for the analysis of substantiation is too short. However, considering the narrative formation and the conflicting meaning attached to the event, it appears unlikely that the event can harness forces to renegotiate German identity narratives in the future.

It appears unlikely not least because an event's power to harness forces for identity narrative negotiations also lies in binding affective engagement and participatory identification with the proposed changes to identity narratives. Affective engagement and participatory identification require emotional charge beyond what appear to be anchors around 'emotional knowledge' (Eroukhmanoff 2019, p. 176). However, where these anchors have not been re-negotiated and where they have failed to provide a "sense" of emotional attunement, it appears unlikely that the event can create these conditions in the future. The Berlin truck attack, therefore, did not appear to settle new emotional anchors around identity narratives or descriptions of terrorist violence but instead around ritualistic practices or ritualistic anchors.

## 6.6. Conclusion

At the onset, this chapter asked what happens when an event that in theory should provide significant space for the negotiation of state identity narratives, such as a violent terrorist attack, competes with other crises that also provide significant space for the negotiation state identity. While acknowledging that the analysis in this chapter is close to when the events happened, one answer suggests that the event became submerged into other crises. It did not provide sufficient space for the negotiation of German identity narratives. Where the event was ‘emplotted’ (White 1997, p. 392) into other long-term narratives, its meaning submerged into their meaning.

As this chapter demonstrated, the event of the Berlin truck attack was pulled apart by short-term narrations that sought to substantiate existing short- and long-term narratives in other areas and with different objectives. In one way, this allowed and allows the event to stay on the move. In another, however, this meant that no determinative reading could provide a sense of what the event meant for German identity narratives.

As political actors linked short-term event narrations to very different long-term narratives, they produced and co-produced the obfuscation of meaning. Diverging links between short-term narrations and long-term narratives produced a conflicting reading of the events and, therefore, audiences struggled to identify with identity narratives that underlined their meaning. Instead, the conflicting links between short-term narrations and long-term narratives created a longing for meaning. Conflict and longing were projected more successfully into the media landscape than carefully crafted government narratives. In discussing the longing for meaning and the search for identity, it should be remembered that both are markers for ontological insecurity.

Further, where the Berlin truck attack was used to substantiate existing long-term narratives and objectives held by political actors and where audiences could not grasp what the attack meant for the identity of the *Self*, the event could not sufficiently and emotively bind identity commitments to its sensemaking. In this way, the Berlin truck attack helped to substantiate ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around Islamist extremist terrorist violence, including ritualistic and affective responses to it. The substantiation of ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) also means that the Berlin truck attack will unlikely be an event around which identity narratives can be negotiated in the future. Where reactions to the event substantiated ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.), agency itself was relegated to partaking in the ritualistic processes accompanying practices of ‘discursive anchor[ing]’

(Ibid.). While political actors sought to harness some forms of ‘creative-constitutive agency’ (Berenskoetter 2020, p. 282) – especially when it came to bringing about legislative changes – they were not able to fully embrace the spectrum of agentic possibility around identity narrative negotiation.

However, it is also important to remember that the lack of moments of ‘creative-constitutive agency’ (Ibid.) does not mean that political actors did not have agency at their disposal to activate or substantiate ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around terrorist violence. As the findings in this chapter have also indicated, rather than only substantiating ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.), political actors engaged in a set of different practices that all linked to anchoring governance of and reactions to terrorist violence, including emotional anchors (solidarity, peace, unity), definitional anchors (violence against innocent lives, an attack on the “way of life”) and ritualistic anchors (social media responses, commemorative practices such as memorials).

The chapter has, finally, shown how difficult it is for political actors to control narratives of the sensemaking of an event and to harness the power inherent to an event for identity narrative negotiation. At the same time, it has also shown that there is agency in the process of substantiating ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.), not least where these anchors also link to their emotional and ritualistic counterparts. Where the event was pulled apart by policymakers’ attempts to link the event to long-term narratives, however, it also appears to have stirred questions as to the meaning of the event more generally. When engaging in the processes that substantiate ‘discursive’ (Ibid.), emotional and ritualistic anchors, policymakers will likely also have to pay attention for the substantiation processes not to establish meaning where it may not be able to reflect on the event itself.

# Chapter 7

## Conclusion

### 7.1. Introduction

This thesis has principally asked how political actors can engage in identity narrative negotiation processes around events that actors consider ‘critical situations’ (Ejdus 2020, p. 2). It has examined how these negotiation processes speak to a reconsideration of agency in the scholarship on ontological security in International Relations (IR) research. It has further proposed that rather than examining what constitutes change and continuity in IR, scholars should examine how political actors narrate change and continuity to identity narrative commitments of states. This thesis has shown in three empirical chapters how processes of identity negotiation can enable agency in the meaning-making and sensemaking of ‘critical situations’ (Ibid.). All three empirical chapters ensured comparability as all were considered terrorist, violent events by German policymakers. However, they differed widely in character, time and place and thus also spoke to different contexts in which identity narrative negotiation can occur. In synthesising the findings, this chapter will specifically focus on the four analytical markers – anxiety, temporality, agency and identity narrative negotiation – and how these four analytical markers speak to the conditions necessary to enable agency in the process of identity narrative negotiation.

This chapter will review each analytical marker, its relevance as evidenced in the empirical chapters and summarise the findings. In committing to the process of ‘ongoing and evolving learning’ (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, p. 55) and to interpretative research in IR, this chapter will also synthesise this thesis’ findings by refining the conceptual grasp and

categories of each analytical marker as evidenced by the empirical material of each case study. It will thus also develop the theoretical framework based on the empirical case studies. In refining analytical markers, the conclusion of this thesis will propose different analytical layers to each marker that can be taken for further research and that are analysed based on the empirical chapters.

This thesis has principally argued that each analytical marker needs to be present for identity narrative negotiation, but that they do not yet signify how political actors pursue identity narrative negotiation. Further, while mono-causal explanations of ‘creative-constitutive agency’ (Berenskoetter 2020, p. 282) are difficult, this thesis finds that where actors commonly narrate events as ruptures, they are also more likely to use the event to settle the rupture through new ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around terrorist, violent events. This thesis finds that ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) also anchor emotions, rituals and identity commitments around these events. Where the significance of an event is unclear, political actors can still ‘signal’ (Ibid., p. 567) agency, however, unlikely by deploying ‘creative-constitutive agency’ (Berenskoetter 2020, p. 282) and instead by facilitating the substantiation of existing ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561).

In concluding, this chapter will point to the limitations of this research, especially where it has not fully engaged with the potential of reception research and socio-historic representations of the same event through time. This chapter will lastly summarise where and how this research can be taken further, especially around the contestation and negotiation of futures during crisis events. It will also propose further research that acknowledges crises that are not anthropogenic and where the *Other* might be more difficult to pin down, such as natural disasters or pandemics.

In seeking to advance the discussion on agency in ontological security, this thesis has also aimed to drive forward the ‘conceptual effort of explaining (inter)action by developing a reading of drives/basic motivations and the ontology of its carrier through an account of the human condition’ (Berenskoetter 2018, p. 814). It has done so, by examining how political actors form and project narratives around events that disrupt. It has further demonstrated how ‘particular account[s] of how the subject (the political actor) is positioned in social space and time’ (Ibid.) matter for identity narrative negotiation by placing anxiety, temporality, agency and identity narratives at the heart of its theoretical and conceptual “toolbox”. This thesis has further evidenced how political actors position themselves in social space and time to attempt the negotiation of identity narratives. This research has thus confirmed that it is possible to

examine ontological security research through a more agentic lens by conceptually linking it to the scholarship in strategic narratives.

## 7.2. The Four Analytical Markers of Identity Narrative Negotiation During Crisis Events

### 7.2.1. Anxiety

In synthesising the analytical marker of anxiety, it is important to remember that ontological security research has argued that ‘while on an individual basis ... leaders will differ in terms of their own ontological security ... what is more relevant is how leaders recognize the position of their state’s “Self” in international society’ (Steele 2008a, pp. 18-19). Further, ‘[a]nxiety over their respective state’s place in the world will still be evident no matter how each individual feels about his or her own sense of integrity’ (Ibid.). Filip Ejdus (2020, p. 2) has further cautioned scholars to think of anxiety in terms of four key areas that speak to the *Self’s* position in the world: ‘the unreliability of the international order, finitude of politics, impertinence of relationships and inconsistency of collective autobiographies’.

In reflection of the core assumptions that conceptually guide anxiety in ontological security research, this thesis finds that while a general sense of anxiety around events might be pervasive and shared by the collective or by state actors, it is still crucial to disentangle different notions of anxiety. This thesis has shown that a conceptual disentanglement of anxiety is specifically important when scholars are interested in examining how political actors use anxiety strategically. In other words, not all anxiety is the same, and, drawing on Alexander Wendt (1992), anxiety is what state actors make of it. In all three empirical chapters, different types of anxiety crucially informed the significance of the events for the process of identity narrative negotiation. More broadly, the finding from the three empirical cases is that anxiety can be categorised in four groups, all of which influence identity narrative negotiation processes differently: (1) individual; (2) social-collective; (3) state-*Self*-historical; and (4) structural-systemic. All groups link differently to the negotiation of identity narratives and are characterised by different features.

**(1) Individual anxiety** describes the anxiety of an individual either by means of their history, role, position within a state, or anxiety around the event. Evidence for individual anxiety was present in all three case studies. For example, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt’s (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SPD) upbringing and biographical

narrative informed his approach to how to react to and view politics more broadly (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.1.). Through his role as Chancellor, the potential loss of his position or reputation was an important reason for why he had stakes in successfully “solving” the kidnapping of industrialist Hanns Martin Schleyer. Likewise, opposition leader Helmut Kohl’s (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*, CDU) ideological background – influenced by a Christian upbringing, and former Chancellor Konrad Adenauer’s *Westpolitik* – informed the stakes that he narrated around state identity during the Schleyer kidnapping. The individual anxiety around the potential loss of his friend Schleyer also appeared to increase the stakes for Kohl (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.4.). While this thesis has cautioned that it is impossible to “know” true intentions (Krebs and Jackson 2007, p. 36), expressions of individual anxiety link the individual actor to their respective roles and, therefore, also inform role conceptions and narrations of responsibility.

Chapter 5 has shown that Chancellor Gerhard Schröder’s leadership style and the mediatisation of his Chancellorship influenced how he incorporated public opinion polls into policymaking choices (Chapter 5, section 5.4.2.). It has further shown that Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer was influenced by his student movement past and the pacifist undercurrents of his party, the Green Party (Chapter 5, sections 5.2 and 5.3.). Especially in narrating troop deployment and the engagement in Afghanistan, the ideological background mattered and also posed some constraints, as seen around the engagement in Kosovo prior to the deployment of troops to Afghanistan (Ibid.).

Chapter 6 on the Berlin truck attack has also examined how, for example, Chancellor Angela Merkel’s biography informed some of her policy choices around the refugee crisis (see Chapter 6, section 6.2.) and why her upbringing was equally relevant to how Merkel deployed rhetoric and enabled narrative sensemaking processes. Similarly, while populists may use anxiety questionably when it comes to either democracy or human rights, they might still be powered by genuine anxiety around change, or a fear of loss of status or privileges. Further to this, the narration of risk and the attempts to quantify risk through legislation might have enabled Interior Minister Lothar de Maizière to seek to advance conceptualisations of internal security (Chapter 6, see section 6.3.2.), irrespective of power political motives attached to these narrations.

The empirical chapters have also demonstrated how individual anxiety plays a role in perceiving and affectively responding to the magnitude of an event either by media actors or audiences more generally. The phenomenology of terrorist violence can cause anxiety because of its materiality or because of general anxiety around risk. To be sure, individual

anxiety might be most difficult, if not impossible, to “measure”. Much of the assessments on individual anxiety are of a suggestive nature because the analysis can only grasp what is expressed. However, in refining the analytical marker of anxiety more generally, individual anxiety does play a role and is worth taking note of.

In terms of the strategic use of individual anxiety, it is important to note that it can lend credibility to political actors who seek to empathise with a collective and the state’s citizens. It can, therefore, give emotional purchase to state identity narratives. It can personalise them, and it can help to invite participatory interpretation through personalisation. Further, individual anxiety can be strategically used to gauge the impact of an event on social-collective anxiety and thus lends political actors the capacity to feel as individuals. Moreover, other political actors may be able to target other political actors on the basis of what they assume is the individual anxiety of that actor. In this way, actors can use ‘representational force’ (Bially-Mattern 2005) to target individual anxiety and to move that actor into action or a policy response.

**(2) Social-collective anxiety** describes the anxiety that binds the ‘affective community’ (Hutchison 2016) by a shared sense of feeling of anxiety around either events or more systemic, structural anxiety. Evidence for social-collective anxiety is found in all three empirical cases, most prominently, however, around the ‘moral panic’ (Musolff 1996) that characterised the events during the German Autumn and the Schleyer kidnapping (Chapter 4). Social-collective anxiety can foster ‘affective communities’ (Hutchison 2016) around uncertainty as they are ‘welded together, at least temporarily, by shared emotional understandings of tragedy’ (Ibid., p. 4). The findings contained within the empirical chapters also show that in working through anxiety, the experience of the ‘affective community’ (Hutchison 2016) can help in providing guidance and stability. At the same time, the shared experience of ‘affective communities’ (Ibid.) can amplify a collective sense of anxiety, and can, therefore, lead to the type of ‘moral panic’ (Musolff 1996) seen during the Schleyer kidnapping. Social collective anxiety is very difficult to measure, and while evidence for it exists in all three chapters, more research is needed to uncover the way in which ‘affective communities’ (Hutchison 2016) come to be and how to understand the fluidity and complexity of their workings. More generally, this thesis has found that one way to look at social-collective anxiety is through the lens of different anchors that enable the shared sense of tragedy or crisis. For example, the study of ritualistic and emotional anchors (see section 7.3.4.) can provide insights into how ‘affective communities’ (Hutchison 2016) respond to ‘critical situations’ (Ejdus 2020, p. 2) and how they establish tools of governance that enable

them to ‘see’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 575) specific types of events and interpret them through settled anchors.

Evidence for social-collective anxiety in Chapter 5 (section 5.3.2.) can be found in anxiety around whether Germany was on the brink of being implicated in a war and whether it would have to deploy troops. Further to this, the magnitude of 9/11 and the global nature of the events, evoked a sense of social-collective anxiety around Germany’s future role in the world, its responsibilities and ultimately the future of the international order. Social-collective anxiety in Chapter 6 (section 6.5.4.) on the Berlin truck attack was evidenced by the audiences’ engagement in rituals and emotional anchors. Chapter 6 (section 6.4.3.) also shows evidence for social-collective anxiety in some media responses that described a sense of longing for German identity narratives. While this thesis has cautioned that it has only analysed media narratives where they reflect on narrative projection, the instances where media outlets referenced longing, indicate how actors can express social-collective anxiety.

In terms of the strategic use of social-collective anxiety, Chapter 4 (section 4.3.4.) on the Schleyer kidnapping argued that the opposition, in particular, used the “mood” and concerns in society to argue for why they were the better parties to govern through uncertainty and unruliness. Chancellor Schmidt sought to harness social-collective anxiety to forge and foster cohesiveness in society. He also attempted to encourage an understanding of participatory citizenship, especially where he narrated the cause of terrorism as a lack of identification with West German identity narratives (Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.). In Chapter 6, Chancellor Merkel also attempted to use social-collective anxiety strategically, especially where she narrated systemic crises as causes for social-collective anxiety and juxtaposed the security and reliability of the German state to it. Chancellor Merkel attempted to further narrate the stability of Germany as significant not only for internal security and unity but also for the stability of the EU which faced multiple crises at the same time (Chapter 6, section 6.2. and 6.3.2.). The strategic use of social-collective anxiety is further evidenced in the New Right’s narratives on the threat to a “Christian Western world” and danger as “brought in” by immigrants and non-German nationals (Chapter 6, section 6.3.2.). While narrated through the *Gefährder* debate, de Maiziere and governmental actors shared the sensemaking of the *Other* as bringing danger and risk to an otherwise secure country (Chapter 6, section 6.3.2.). The strategic use of social-collective anxiety is a democratically risky tool, not least where it enables strong binaries around the *Self* and *Other* and where it facilitates exclusionary practices.

**(3) State-*Self*-historical anxiety** describes the significance of trauma and loss (Innes and Steele 2013) for the lived experience and significance of an event. Historically-induced anxiety is closely connected to the reasons for establishing identity narratives that seek to smoothen out inconsistencies in the narrative of the *Self*. Evidence for state-*Self*-historical anxiety featured in all three empirical cases, yet, most prominently around the viability of German democracy in light of its dark and gruesome WWII past. During the Schleyer kidnapping, most of Germany's policymakers and the economic elite had lived through WWII (Chapter 4, section 4.3.1.). The complicity in WWII and the inability of German policymakers and society to properly address its past was a core feature of the student movement's protests, and lastly the RAF's violence. Further, the West German state was in its "infancy", and German policymakers, as well as international audiences, were still suspicious of German power and hesitant to believe in the viability and durability of West German democracy (Chapter 4, section 4.2.). In seeking to reassure national and international audiences, the Schleyer kidnapping thus stirred fears that West Germany was either not ready to stand the test of fighting anti-democratic forces, or that its democracy would fall apart altogether (Chapter 4, sections 4.3.2. to 4.3.5.). For Chancellor Schmidt and the SPD more broadly, the failure of the Weimar Republic had made social consensus and solidarity among democrats a central element of its narratives surrounding the Schleyer kidnapping (Chapter 4, sections 4.3.2. and 4.3.3.). For Kohl and the opposition, the failure of the Weimar Republic had been caused by a lack of order and values both of which they likened to the terrorists' violence (Chapter 4, sections 4.3.4. and 4.3.5.).

State-*Self*-historical anxiety also mattered for how most of the German political elite understood Germany's responsibility after 9/11. To be sure, Chancellor Schröder and Foreign Minister Fischer also drew on this anxiety to exert 'constitutive-creative agency' (Berenskoetter 2020, p. 282) and 'embrace' (Ibid., p. 279) this anxiety by seeking to redescribe Germany's international role. However, where they sought to warp these redescrptions around the anxiety of Germany's past, they also tied resolutions to it by narrating the repayment of solidarity (Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.). Angela Merkel, Friedrich Merz and the opposition, instead, expressed anxiety around losing the stability of the transatlantic alliance precisely because it was historically reasoned-for (Chapter 5, section 5.3.3.). They saw Germany's ontological security as rooted in the transatlantic alliance. The state-*Self*-historical anxiety also played a role for how audiences perceived military interventions and necessitated justification strategies around troop deployment in Afghanistan that took the identity narratives of military restraint into account (Chapter 5, section 5.4.3.).

State-*Self*-historical anxiety also mattered for how Germany's policymakers perceived and feared the surge of far-right populism and the success of the *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) party. For example, Merkel's attempt to premeditate the narrative landscape by avoiding an active construction of the "West" was in part informed by the anxiety surrounding the surge of populism (Chapter 6, section 6.3.2.). State-*Self*-historical anxiety – while it does not have to restrict agency – creates conditions by which political actors are limited and through which they have to work. This, however, does not mean that state-*Self*-anxiety stifles the exertion of 'creative-constitutive agency' (Berenskoetter 2020, p. 282).

**(4) Structural-systemic anxiety** describes more general anxiety concerning the condition of the state around an event, irrespective of the event. Evidence for structural-systemic anxiety can be found in all three empirical cases. Further, structural-systemic anxiety in all three empirical cases, described the anxiety around what actors perceived as a changing international system. In the case of the Schleyer kidnapping (Chapter 4, section 4.2.), structural-systemic anxiety concerned the uncertainties around the economic crises and political instability of the 1970s but also the "infancy" of West German democracy.

In Chapter 5, structural-systemic anxiety noted the recent changes after the Cold War and Germany's unification. The structural-systemic anxiety in Chapter 5 engendered notions of anxiety around the implications of Germany's unification for both domestic questions to German identity but also questions by international actors around whether a unified Germany was inherently dangerous (Chapter 5, section 5.2.).

One crucial finding on structural-systemic anxiety, is that its narration can be used strategically to emphasise certainty around the *Self*, as evidenced in Chapter 6. For example, Angela Merkel's apocalypse narrative is a system narrative that seeks to juxtapose narratives of certainty of the *Self* to the systemic conditions of anxiety (Chapter 6, section 6.3.2.). In the production of crisis, structural-systemic anxiety further helped the performance of crisis (Moffitt 2016, p. 119) by populist leaders of the AfD and thus advanced more general populist narratives on the inherent danger of the *Other* (Chapter 6, section 6.3.2.). In comparative perspective, structural-systemic anxiety played its most dominant role in Chapter 6. The 'emplotment' (White 1997, p. 392) of the event into broader long-term narratives, policy objectives and in the context of manifold crises, submerged the event's meaning into these narrative structures. As a consequence, it left little room for identity narrative negotiation around the event.

More importantly, all different layers of anxiety can describe anxiety around events, and they come together in different ways during events. This study has shown that anxiety

also relates closely to the lived experience and materiality of and affective response to an event. Anxiety around events also concerns notions of temporality as they can alter the perception of lived experience. More generally, anxiety reflects on ontological insecurity around events that can question the stability of an identity narrative. The materiality of the event, its shock and the phenomenology of violence all conjure to question the integrity of the *Self* and thus carry the space to renegotiate identity narratives through them. However, anxiety around events is also enabled through anchors and is subject to strategic use. As this thesis has demonstrated, the strategic use of anxiety speaks pertinently to understanding the agency inherent to identity narrative negotiations around events and the process of setting anxiety through anchors.

### 7.2.2. Temporality

This thesis has argued that in the production and construction of ‘critical situations’ (Ejdus 2020, p. 2), or critical events, political actors can ‘signal’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 567) political agency by engaging temporal notions of rupture, continuity, singularity and series. Not all events logically present themselves as ruptures. They have to be accompanied by a narrative process that establishes the event as rapturous. This narration will have to clarify why, to what, and for whom the event constitutes a rupture. When rupture is articulated, and when events constitute a crisis, they break with what is considered the rhythm of time. Time itself attains a new meaning, not least in the separation of a before and after and ‘the actors and witnesses of a historical event are placed in a new temporality, in which life takes on a different dimension’ (Le Dantec-Lowry and Raynaud 2007). Meaning has to be forged and expressed. The process by which actors can do so, is a strategic narrative process. It is within rupture that the possibility to create and make new meanings of reality, time and identity exists.

As this thesis has shown, the felt rupture – the ‘gaping wound’ (Ibid) to temporality – is a powerful moment for actors to exert agency in the process of writing a state’s identity narrative commitments; either by rewriting its historical narrative, altering the present-day national biography or by redrafting visions of the future *Self*. This point is reflected by Brent Steele (2010, p. 37), who defines ruptures as the break of a ‘rhythmic stratum’ as they ‘[invade] the routines of power’. Narratives emerge to restore, or to reinstall the naturalness of these rhythms and routines, or to transform them altogether. Where rupture to the *Self* occurs, ‘it exists and matters as a haunting mark, a scarring piece of reality that denotes something

that refuses to hide the gaping wound left by the initially terrifying sight' (Debrix 2007, p. 138).

For this thesis, temporality and spatiality have proven crucial for an analytical grasp of identity narrative negotiation on multiple levels. First, 'critical situations' (Ejdus 2020, p. 2), such as violent events require an understanding as to the nature of the rupture and the nature of uncertainty. In narrating temporal 'shapes' (Jarvis 2008, p. 246) all actors in the empirical cases have attempted to either narrate 'temporal discontinuity; temporal linearity' or 'timelessness' (Ibid.) to the events. They sought to link these 'shapes' (Ibid.) to narratives of the *Self*, the threat landscape and future visions of the *Self* around the negotiation of meaning. Where the *Self* links to temporality and the negotiation of futures, this thesis finds that the reason for why identity narrative negotiations make sense is because the future engenders meaning and significance. The stakes in the future are prevalent, irrespective of whether actors can, or seek to re-negotiate how past events have come to settle identity narrative commitments. Neither the narration of the *Self* nor how narratives were enacted would have been credible if it were not for an explanation as to why the narratives of the *Self*, or proposed movement to the narratives of the *Self*, mattered for the future of the *Self*. For example, Chancellor Schröder's redescription of Germany's international responsibility would not have been able to build momentum if it had not been closely tied to an understanding of why this responsibility mattered for the future.

Similarly, how Schröder sought to enact the redescription of Germany's role, for example through the deployment of troops to Afghanistan or by rejecting the participation in the Iraq War, would not have made sense, if the narrative enactment had not linked to narratives on why these actions mattered for Germany's future. Likewise, Foreign Minister Fischer's proposal on the future of the international world order would have carried little persuasive potential if he had not narrated significance to the future of the international order. Even in the reiterative and restorative attempts of the opposition by, for example, Angela Merkel (CDU) or Friedrich Merz (CDU), the viability of Germany's future constituted the foundation for the reiteration and restoration of identity narrative commitments through the transatlantic partnership. The opposition's sense of anxiety around the loss of the transatlantic partnership through Schröder actions could not have been stirred if this sense of loss was not connected to insecurity and uncertainty about the future relationship.

In this way, the thesis can also affirm that the 'fantasies' (Browning 2019) for futures, provoke movement and underpin the justifications for identity narrative negotiations. For example, in Chapter 4 on the Schleyer kidnapping, the description of the bleak future should

the Social-Democratic ‘suicidal liberalisation’ (Roegele 1977, translated by author) continue, empowered much of Helmut Kohl’s narrations of the RAF’s threat to West Germany’s ontological security. At the same time, he sought to link the restoration of identity narrative commitments and traditional values to a safe and orderly future, which the opposition more broadly argued, was essential for the survival of West German democracy.

This thesis has also shown that temporality is essential for the analysis of how the *Self* progresses. Felix Berenskoetter (2014, p. 270) argues that ‘to grasp the content of a biographical narrative, it is sensible first to trace how it situates the unfolding *Self* in time’. While the temporal and spatial placement of the *Self* around an event is crucial, this thesis has also found that it is equally important to acknowledge that narratives are inherently temporal and their persuasiveness would not be possible without enabling the *Self*’s movement *through* time. In short, this thesis finds that the *Self* grasps itself by unfolding through time.

In summary, temporality enables agency because temporality, in the context of events, is not a straightforward or a “logically” linear progress. Temporality is imbued with normative and moral inscriptions. It implies specifications of past, present and future. Where a state *Self* comes from, will decisively influence expressions of where the *Self* is and where the *Self* goes. Writing temporality involves writing a coherent storyline that links past, present and future in meaningful ways.

Consequently, this study proves that writing temporality is inherently strategically relevant because it can communicate the coherence and consistency of identity through time. Temporality and strategic narratives can establish inevitability and necessity in the form of biographical justifications. While ‘[d]uring rupture, we may have the sense that time is accelerating or slowing down, or even that time has stopped’ (Wagner-Pacifici 2017, p. 63), these temporalities also enable anchoring processes to settle the uncertainty they appear to cause. When anchors settle uncertainties, they can also enable narrations of change or continuity. After all, even change and continuity are tempo-spatial concepts and rely – as has been the theoretical proposition at the beginning of this thesis – on narratives to make sense of them. Where Robin Wagner-Pacifici (2017) has emphasised the importance of understanding the dislocation of temporality through disassembled fragments of the past, the present and the future, she also encourages scholars to understand the dislocation of temporality to rest within the event itself. Dislocations of temporality require anchors. Drawing on the analogy of Arthur Rimbaud’s boat, this thesis referred to in its introduction, agency comes to the fore where the waves of history require anchors for it to settle. Anchors enable actors to guide the shift from one probability regime to another through events. Whether there is a strategic

intention or objective to facilitate this cognitive and narrated shift, however, is as much subject to agency as enabling the shifts themselves.

### 7.2.3. Agency

This thesis has proposed to conceptualise agency through the narration of movement – either by restoration, redescription or reiteration – of existing identity narratives. In doing so, it has suggested an analysis of the interaction between long-term narratives and short-term narrations. It has further suggested that the narrated movements of restoration, redescription and reiteration can incorporate different conceptualisations of agency, such those established by Berenskoetter (2020).

As suggested in the introduction of this thesis, a ‘narrative entails an initial situation or order, a problem that disrupts that order, and a resolution that re-establishes order, though that order may be slightly altered from the initial situation’ (Miskimmon, O’Loughlin and Roselle 2013, p. 5). It follows that identity narratives entail an initial situation that poses a challenge to an identity narrative and a resolution for that identity narrative either by redescription, reiteration or restoration. It suggests identity commitments, how to get there and how to enact or substantiate them. In examining movement or stasis as expressed through narratives, this thesis finds that the narration of causal transformation is integral to understanding movement. It further finds that the examination of causal links between the narration of the state’s ontological status and the future design of an identity narrative commitment is crucial. This thesis has suggested that three movement narratives grasp agency analytically. Based on the evidence in the three empirical chapters, it finds it important to recognise that actors can deploy and mix different movement narratives. While they can propose movement through restorative narratives in some areas, they may choose to deploy reiterative narratives in others. In choosing different ways of exerting agency, actors are flexible in deciding upon how they exert agency through identity narrative negotiations.

**Redescriptive movement narratives** were evident in all three empirical case studies, although in varying degrees and along a spectrum. Chancellor Schröder and Foreign Minister Fischer attempted to redescribe identity narratives around Germany’s international responsibility during 9/11 most prominently, including the negotiation of core aspects of German identity narratives around military restraint (Chapter 5). Likewise, the narration of self-confidence supported the identity negotiation around core relationships such as the relationship to the US and as enacted powerfully around the rejection of the Iraq War (Chapter 5, sections 5.3.3. and 5.3.4.). The redescriptive narratives drew on the centrality of

rupture in the narration of 9/11 as dividing the international order between a “before and after” (Chapter 5, section 5.3.4.). By drawing on historical narratives of alliance duty, Schröder further sought to argue that military engagement in Afghanistan also meant that Germany had now repaid its historical duty to the US. In doing so, he aimed to move Germany from one phase (adolescence) to another (adulthood). The significance of temporality for the movement inherent to the maturity narrative further facilitated 9/11 to become a critical event around which political actors aimed to strategically negotiate identity narratives. Oppositional actors also drew on redescriptive movement in arguing that 9/11 was the moment at which the groundwork for Germany’s position had to be developed (Chapter 5, section 5.3.3.). However, in sketching out the parameters of such groundwork, they proposed a mixture of reiterative and restorative narratives around the re-establishment of, and a renewed commitment to, the transatlantic alliance.

Redescription narratives were also evident in Chapter 4, although not as comprehensively across government as in Chapter 5. Most dominantly, the government’s enactment of narratives carried redescriptive elements forward by establishing institutionalised narrative controls and passing legislation that infringed upon basic rights, such as the contact ban. This thesis also found that when exerted through the enactment of narratives, agency can be subverted by the narrativity these actions carry. In the case of Chancellor Schmidt, for example, the most serious threat to the credibility of liberal democratic narratives came from the fact that the enactment of narratives undermined the narratives they sought to carry (Chapter 4, sections 4.3.3. and 4.3.5.). Some redescriptive movement narratives were also evident in how Schmidt sought to redescribe the identity narratives of the younger generations, which he characterised as lacking the identification with German identity narratives (Chapter 4, section 4.3.3.).

In Chapter 6, there is little evidence for redescriptive narratives, except for where actors sought to enact policy changes such as changes to Germany’s security architecture. Where there is a redescriptive element in policy narratives on changes to security legislation, it has to be noted that it did not specifically tie to the event (Chapter 6, section 6.3.2.). Political actors used the Berlin truck attack, instead, to substantiate long-term narratives and facilitate the realisation of long-term policy objectives.

**Reiterative movement narratives** are evident in all three chapters and more generally helped to facilitate the substantiation of existing ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561). Reiterative narratives link closely to how ontological security has conceptualised the need for actors to weave critical events into existing identity

narratives. This thesis has shown that this form of narrative movement still harbours enormous potential for exerting agency, when used to reason for policies, or when used to substantiate anchors. More generally, this thesis suggests that the substantiation of anchors is an important agentic tool. Its acknowledgement is crucial for understanding the ordering power of anchors for ‘seeing’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 575) different event groups. While ‘creative-constitutive agency’ (Berenskoetter 2020, p. 282) may grasp moments of redescription, the power of narrative structures lies in their persuasiveness and seemingly “natural” way of making sense of the world. It, therefore, takes agency to substantiate narrative structures, even if narrative structures are not only substantiated by intention or by strategic objectives.

This thesis has also found that reiterative movement narratives can signal ontological insecurity. When actors continuously emphasise, and seek provide assurances as to the stability of the *Self*, it may at heart reflect on anxiety around that not being the case, as for example seen in Chancellor Schmidt’s assurances as to the viability of West German democracy (Chapter 4, section 4.3.). Reiterative movement was further evident in narratives that told the story about a strong state that was well equipped and able to handle RAF terrorism. In seeking to reiterate the rule of law and the democratic state, Chancellor Schmidt attempted not so much to rewrite West German identity narratives but rather to facilitate the identification with West German identity narratives, especially by younger generations. In doing so, Chancellor Schmidt narrated the lack of identification as a failure of educational policies rather than an inherent flaw in West German identity narratives. He, therefore, attempted to encourage narratives of citizenship and the participatory interpretation of these narratives.

In Chapter 5, reiterative narratives were evident in solidarity narratives after 9/11, through which Chancellor Schröder sought to reiterate the importance of the transatlantic alliance and the relationship to the US. More importantly, reiterative narratives served in part, to control the anxiety surrounding 9/11 by drawing on available narrative structures and by responding to what the Schröder government read as expectations by the US directed at Germany.

Chapter 6 featured reiterative movement narratives most pronouncedly, especially where they substantiated existing ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around Islamist-extremist terrorism. In substantiating ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.), Interior Minister de Maizière, for example, focused on narrating the clandestine and “invisible” *Gefährder* group, who, should they realise their risk potential, could strike

anywhere at any point. Likewise, the understanding of “imported” fear, substantiated the link between “foreigners” as criminal, especially evidenced where narratives linked to refugees.

It is noteworthy that political actors not only substantiated ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) around Islamist-extremist terrorism, but they also used narratives on Islamist-extremist terrorism to substantiate narratives on refugees and associations to crime. This thesis thus proves that it is crucial to acknowledge how different ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) of different event groups substantiate each other, especially when they are strategically linked. The scholarship in securitisation speaks to how some links between policy fields are discursively constructed and how policy areas become discursively securitised (Aradau and van Munster 2012; Balzaq 2011; Buzan, Weaver and de Wilde 1998). However, this thesis finds that the conceptualisation of anchors and their negotiation are better equipped to examine agency inherent to the negotiation processes.

**Restorative movement narratives** were also evident in all three empirical chapters, especially where actors sought to construct counternarratives to redescriptive movement narratives. In Chapter 4 on the Schleyer kidnapping, restorative movement narratives were the dominant movement narratives proposed by Helmut Kohl and the opposition. By linking the temporality of “returning” to order, Helmut Kohl and the opposition sought to offer a counternarrative to what they suggested was the root cause of terrorism. Restorative movement narratives further reasoned for why the government could not solve terrorism, specified in the ‘suicidal liberalisation’ (Roegele 1977) proposed by the SPD and the Schmidt government. The opposition narrated movement to existing narrative structures by setting moral boundaries around movement and by suggesting that transformation of identity narrative commitments was harmful and detrimental to the strength of West German democracy (Chapter 4, sections 4.3.4. and 4.3.5.). In advancing narratives on the threat landscape, the opposition also sought to tie prescriptions of what it meant to be a good citizen to restorative movement narratives, thereby encouraging a strong binary of good and evil.

While the Schmidt government did not dominantly draw on restorative movement narratives, it did encourage restoration of faith in the viability of West German identity narratives, especially by the younger generations. The restoration linked closely to reiteration and sought to encourage a renewed identification with existing narrative structures. In proposing restorative movement narratives, however, the opposition increased pressure on the Schmidt government and helped to unsettle the ontological security of West Germany during the Schleyer kidnapping.

Restorative movement narratives also featured in Chapter 5 on 9/11. While the opposition around Friedrich Merz and Angela Merkel also drew on reiterative narratives, they suggested that the restoration of commitment to the transatlantic partnership was a substantial element of Germany's future security. In the process of identity narrative negotiation during Chapter 5, however, restorative movement narratives played a less pronounced role.

Restorative movement in Chapter 6, was most dominantly used by populist forces, such as the AfD. In seeking to push for narrative sensemaking of the Berlin truck attack as evidence for the loss of control and the loss of the "West" to the "Orient", populist forces aimed to performatively produce crisis (Moffitt 2016, p. 119) around the Berlin truck attack (see Chapter 6, section 6.3.2.). Elements of populist narratives were also evident in the government's narrative sensemaking, especially when actors used the Berlin truck attack to substantiate existing long-term narratives and policy objectives.

In terms of the strategic use of restorative movement narratives, this thesis finds that it is crucial to acknowledge their role in the production of crisis, substantiation of anchors and binary readings of the *Self* and the *Other*. When actors used restorative movement narratives, they tended to tie them to a stricter reading of the *Self*, the *Other* and a more exclusive understanding of the collective.

#### 7.2.4. The Negotiation of Identity Narratives Through Anchors

This thesis has engaged the concept of 'discursive anchors' (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) to argue that identity narratives are negotiated by setting or substantiating them around crisis events. In short, anchors enable political agency and, crucially, reflect on the negotiation between long-term narratives and short-term narrations. This thesis finds the concept of 'discursive anchors' (Ibid.) to be particularly suitable to explore the role of agency in the process of identity narrative negotiation. However, this thesis finds that in the process of 'discursive[ly] anchor[ing]' (Ibid.) crisis events, it is helpful to disentangle between different anchors as part of the process of identity narrative negotiation.

Alexandra Homolar and Pablo A. Rodríguez-Merino (2019, p. 567) focus in particular on what makes actors 'see' events as terrorist violence, for example, through understanding "'common sense" terrorism markers' (Ibid., p. 575). This thesis finds that the concept can be disentangled and expanded on, to include three additional layers: (1) Descriptive/definitional anchors; (2) Emotional anchors; (3) Ritualistic anchors. The empirical chapters show that all anchors, once activated or evoked, can 'push our sensemaking' (Ibid., p. 575) of events in a certain direction. However, not all have to be necessarily in place to suggest the reading of an

event as being a specific type of event. At the same time, all different layers to the process of anchoring provide an access point for setting new anchors around events and, therefore, also provide an access point for political agency.

**Descriptive/definitional anchors** resonate closest with what Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino (2019, p. 567) establish in their research, namely that ‘language games about the meaning of violent events’ on characteristic features of terrorist violence are ‘articulated as being pragmatic, rational, and apolitical indicators’. A variety of actors recognise and act on the stakes in gaining definitional authority over what constitutes a specific group of ‘critical situations’ (Ejdus 2020, p. 2). Here, the analytical exercise is to recognise how agents evoke and engage ‘rhetorical claims’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) about the characteristic features of an event. Further, this thesis finds that how ‘the attempt by different parties to establish the “true” story that underlies and explains the event’ (Ibid., p. 575) can explain the characteristic and definitional qualities that actors can activate and substantiate in the sensemaking of future events.

In a comparative perspective, in all three empirical case studies, the descriptive/definition anchors that political actors engaged and activated, concerned the role of terrorism as an attack against innocent victims in contrast to ahistorical and apolitical terrorism perpetrated by evil and mad terrorists. Further to this, in all empirical cases, the sudden and unexpected nature of the terrorist attacks played a role in the narrative construction of the events. However, in the case of the Berlin truck attack, the unexpected nature of the event was soon mitigated by narratives that ‘emplotted’ (White 1997, p. 392) the event in series of events with an Islamist-extremist background (see Chapter 6, section 6.3.2.).

In their discussion of ‘discursive anchors’, Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino (2019, p. 561) likewise suggest that characteristic features concerning: ‘Violence against civilians’ (Ibid., p. 567); ‘The Status of victims’ (p. 568); ‘The context of violence’ (Ibid., p. 569); ‘Arbitrary violence’ (Ibid., p. 571); and ‘Political violence’ (Ibid., p. 572) play a role in the definitional exercise around terrorist, violent events. More generally, in the context of this thesis, the characteristic features played a role in all three chapters. What differed is how political actors activated, substantiated or set the specifics of each characteristic feature.

As the analyses in the empirical chapters show, descriptive/definitional anchors around event groups are an important means in the sensemaking and categorisation of events as they occur. They help to group lived experiences, and once they become settled around specific event groups, they help the identification of such groups. More importantly, it appears that when anchors around event groups are settled, they are also settled through other

anchors, such as emotional and ritualistic anchors. This thesis finds that once the descriptive/definitional anchors become settled, they are more difficult to unsettle or disentangle from other anchors that they are attached to. Settled anchors, in turn, can limit attempts by actors to redescribe identity narratives around events, as seen in the case of the Berlin truck attack (Chapter 6).

**Emotional anchors** relate to ‘collective emotional knowledge’ (Eroukhmanoff 2019, p. 176) that guide the affective experience of and emotional response to event groups, once settled. When emotional anchors settle ‘emotional “know-how”’, they also help to govern and inform ‘individuals about how to emotionally behave when terror attacks happen’ (Ibid.). Moreover, when emotional anchors are settled in conjunction with other anchors, they can help in guiding state behaviour by governing the appropriateness of responses. This thesis also finds that emotional anchors help in binding different practices and routines to express them and thereby facilitate the construction of ‘cultural sensibilities that embody what people see as their communities’ (Shifman 2014, p. 60). The role of emotional anchors is also important when it comes to settling pre-discursive notions of affect. While they suggest that emotional responses to terrorist attacks are not ‘entirely spontaneous’ (Eroukhmanoff 2019, p. 176), they can also affect how individuals and state actors recognise and physically react to specific event groups. As affect is moulded into the expression of the emotional experience of different critical events, emotional anchors guide and govern the narration of affect.

This thesis has shown that in terms of the strategic use of emotional anchors, it is crucial to recognise their importance for the credibility of strategic narratives that political actors form around events. Where actors are able to alter emotional anchors around events, they also hold the key to alter whether events are recognised as sufficiently critical in the first place. Of course, much of this relates to the materiality of and the pre-discursive, affective response to an event. However, where emotional anchors also establish guidelines around ‘emotional governance’ (Ibid., p. 168), they can inform affective responses by suggesting that an ‘affective community’ (Hutchison 2016) should be affected by certain types of violence.

When such suggestions become common-sense and where emotional anchors are settled, they will also inform affective responses, similar to when ‘discursive anchors’ enable audiences to ‘see’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) terrorist violence. As this study finds, political actors can also explore how setting or substantiating emotional anchors is a crucial tool to exerting agency during critical events. Political actors can further use emotional anchors, for example, to substantiate restoration, reiteration or redescription movement narratives by activating some anchors and silencing others. Further to this,

emotional anchors can mobilise audiences; they can encourage participatory interpretation with narrative sensemaking processes and can foster and forge ‘affective communities’ (Hutchison 2016). However, when emotional anchors are tied to other anchors, such as ritualistic anchors, for example, they might also be misleading as to the ordering power they entail. For example, when the emotional experience of events become ritualised, it can create simulacrum that lack affective authenticity. In this way, they become a spectacle rather than carrying genuine emotions, or more appropriately, substitutes for emotional processes. However, when political actors seek to strategically set or substantiate emotional anchors, and when these anchors ‘lack in authenticity’ (Eroukhmanoff 2019, p. 181), the strategic use of these anchors may work counterintuitively as to why they were originally activated.

For example, when emotional anchors seek to forge ‘affective communities’ (Hutchison 2016) but fail to make sense of a critical event because they have become ‘sensational representations’ instead of ‘liberat[ing] the forceful presence of sensation’ (Eroukhmanoff 2019, p. 181), they may leave the ‘affective community’ (Hutchison 2016) not bound but disconnected. Chapter 6, for example, has shown that political actors sought to activate emotional anchors around notions of solidarity, unity and togetherness, yet at the same time, it appeared unclear as to whether the narratives and their enactment could carry the emotional charge. While limited by the scope of data collection, the ‘perspicuous instances’ (Jalbert 1999) of how, for example, media actors expressed a sense of longing, spoke to the uncertainty around the emotional charge and mirrored, instead, the restorative movement narratives advocated by populist forces (Chapter 6, section 6.4.3.).

**Ritualistic anchors** settle ritualistic practices around the reaction to event groups by setting commonly accepted routines and behaviours. This thesis finds that once these ritualistic anchors are settled, they enable how audiences perceive event groups. Ritualistic anchors also enable the formation and consolidation of ‘affective communities’ (Hutchison 2016). Activities that underlie ritualistic anchors and ‘construct shared values’ also contribute to ‘community-formation’ (Eroukhmanoff 2019, p. 175). However, ritualistic anchors do not necessarily have to be observable. Individuals can still feel they belong to a community and substantiate ritualistic anchors based on something they are doing, whilst others are not observing them carrying out that activity.

However, for ritualistic anchors to settle, the performative and observable quality of those rituals is needed for constructing the common-sense settledness of these anchors. Ritualistic anchors also include institutionalised processes by, for example, media rituals such as news specials on TV. They also include practices such as press conferences held by

politicians after an event, memorial services or vigils. In all three empirical chapters, there is evidence of ritualistic anchors, and it is important to recognise how they also consolidate and enable other anchors.

For example, Schmidt's speech on TV on the evening of the Schleyer kidnapping was part of a ritualistic recognition of the significance of the event (Chapter 4, section 4.3.). More importantly, although not fully explored in this thesis, further research should consider how legislating new laws, proposing tighter measures or setting up commissions after terrorist events could also become ritualistic anchors. The important point to acknowledge is that ritualistic anchors – indeed, all anchors – set expectations as to the behaviour of the groups of people that settle and substantiate them. When actors break with the scripts that ritualistic anchors carry, it may emphasise the significance of an event, or it can lead to the disappointment of expectations and a loss of legitimacy or credibility. Ritualistic anchors around terrorist violence are also important 'anxiety-controlling mechanisms' (Giddens 1984, p. 50) in that, when they are practices, they provide assurance and governance (see Huysman 2011). For example, Chapter 6 has shown that social media rituals, such as declarations of solidarity, construct rituals and practices that seek to foster a sense of the 'affective community' (Hutchison 2016). Similarly, the memorial service in the Gedächtniskirche was a form of enabling ritualistic anchors around terrorist violence (Chapter 6, section 6.3.1.).

When actors set new anchors around events, ritualistic anchors can be built alongside. While, for example, ritualistic anchors were evident in Chapter 5, they substantiated anchors around critical events more generally (expression of solidarity, media rituals, press conferences). They did not necessarily indicate, yet, ritualistic anchors around terrorist violence. However, not all ritualistic anchors are exclusive to a specific event group, and it is equally important to acknowledge that to recognise terrorist events as terrorist events, requires the activation and substantiation of more than just ritualistic anchors.

One point worth noting is that while the ritualistic anchor might not change (expression of solidarity), the way in which it is expressed can change with time and different media environments. For example, lighting characteristic monuments in the colours of the attacked nation in the wake of a terrorist attack is a rather recent ritualistic anchor that seeks to express solidarity (Chapter 6, section 6.4.3.). When capitals do so, they also enable the possibility of these ritualistic anchors to settle and to substantiate inclusive and exclusive behaviour toward in- and out-group by deciding when to project national colours and when not to.

Crucially and in synthesising the findings of this thesis, all anchors also carry narratives of the *Self* and the *Other*. In this way, anchors engender notions of the *Self* around event groups. They tie role conceptions and expectations and are also a means to delineate the boundaries of ‘affective communities’ (Hutchison 2016) and those that are subject to governance processes. When anchors also settle identity narratives around them, agency can enable identity narrative negotiation through negotiating anchors around event groups.

Crucially, while harbouring notions of the *Self*, anchors also carry narratives of the *Other*. The narration of ‘discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) around terrorist violence relies on a specific “type” of the *Other* in all empirical cases. It is noteworthy that while Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino (Ibid.) argue that there is an inherent “othering” labeling bias in the narrative construction of political violence, in particular where the event makes it possible to establish associations between Islam, violence and terrorism’, the bias was equally dominant in the narration of the Schleyer kidnapping.

In all three empirical cases examined in this thesis, terrorist violence was juxtaposed to the values of Christianity. The difference between 9/11, the Berlin truck attack and the Schleyer kidnapping, however, was how the narration of the *Other* linked to Christian values. Whereas the narration of the Schleyer kidnapping considered a younger generation to have either been miseducated or to have lost its Christian and democratic values, Christian values were juxtaposed to the *Other* and considered as a binary opposite to Islam during 9/11 and the Berlin truck attack. The specific construction of political violence through the othering bias also meant a different target for proposed solutions to the threat of the *Other*. Rather than the education of younger generations, the proposed solution was to limit “bringing in” supposedly dangerous *Others*, or by targeting the *Gefährder* group. The importance of the *Other* in the narrative construction of terrorist violence suggests that when ‘discursive anchors’ (Ibid.) ‘implicitly set forth what type of violence is morally acceptable’ (Ibid., p. 575), they also substantiate or negotiate the *Other* inherent to the narrative construction of political violence. It follows that it is more likely that the setting of new anchors can bring about a change in the construction of the *Other*. In contrast, the substantiation of anchors, also substantiates the narrative construction of the *Other*.

In summary, all anchors provide an access point for political actors to exert agency in the identity narrative negotiation around critical events. It is important to note nevertheless that a projection of settling anchors is incredibly complex and difficult, not least where they can instantaneously affect an individual’s or a collective’s experience of an event, which is where the power rests in shaping them. The process of negotiating anchors around identity

narratives, when the *Self* is unsettled, becomes even more complicated because narrative projection can go beyond the instrumental use of language. As Ben O’Loughlin, Alister Miskimmon and Laura Roselle (2017, p. 33) caution: ‘It is an unpredictable, textured, and recursive set of overlapping ecologies in which history can be mobilized through visuals, symbols, and appeals to emotion. Much of this may be unintentional’. What can the unintentional nature of narrative projection reveal about the possibility of agency? If much of the narrative projection is unintentional, how can political actors act with intent and make sense of their agency?

This thesis has answered these questions in two ways by firstly showing links between how anchors have an effect on what are considered “objective” perceptions of violent events, and secondly by how the agency involved in the process of setting anchors can also answer to how there is agency to work around the unintentional effects of narrative projection. When relating the event to unintentional aspects of narrative projection, this thesis finds that while the event may unintentionally travel through time, actors can deploy agency in “bringing back” its meaning for state identity narrative commitments and by seeking to settle it. In the words of Wagner-Pacifici (2017, p. 5) ‘there is a clear preoccupation (sometimes implicit and sometimes explicit) in bounding events in time and space’. To be sure, which narratives ‘stick’ (Miskimmon and O’Loughlin 2019) can be as unintentional in its effects as the meaning that actors seek to project. Yet, the conscientious effort of actors to provide meaning still ‘signal[s]’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 567) agency.

The empirical case studies, however, have also shown, that how anchors are settled will likely contribute to the ability of actors to re-engage events for future identity narrative negotiation. Further, to this, this thesis finds that engaging with affect and the affect landscape is a crucial aspect of the process of identity narrative negotiation. Only if actors can conjure a similar emotional stake around the sensemaking of the event, they are able to un-do the anchors that have sought to settle the uncertainty the events have carried and that carried the events.

In summary, this thesis finds that where anchors are settled or substantiated through narratives, they are also more difficult to unsettle. Their potential to provide a contestational space for identity narrative negotiation becomes increasingly limited through time. Unless new anchors around crisis events can produce an unsettling of what is commonly accepted, or unless political actors actively target existing anchors and are able to evoke equally affective experiences, anchors will be more likely subject to their substantiation.

### 7.3. Limitations and Summary of Further Research

This research has not fully engaged with studying narrative reception and has restricted the study of narrative projection to where it demonstrated how political actors sought to work through media environments. Studying narrative reception becomes even more difficult when acknowledging that the narrative cycle is but an abstraction of the complex interaction between all of its elements. For example, Chancellor Schröder decisively incorporated public opinion polls in choices that were relevant to narrative formation processes such as the rejection of participating in the Iraq War (Chapter 5, section 5.4.3.). At the same time, the Anti-US sentiments of German audiences were also a product of media narratives and historical narratives that shaped the understanding of US policies. These two caveats highlight only two possible difficulties with audience research and have not yet addressed the difficulties surrounding the incorporation of individual, lived experiences in the study of narrative sensemaking. Whilst research has widely supported the notion that human beings process information, events and experiences through narratives (see Bruner 1991; Brown, Stacey and Nandhakumar 2008), it is all the more difficult to understand how exactly they do so. Where scholars effectively lack comprehensive tools to measure reception and why some narratives ‘stick’ (Miskimmon and O’Loughlin 2019) and others do not, opinion polls and socio-cultural uptake in the form of literature, art, film and music, come closest to understanding processes of narrative sensemaking in audiences. However, they still cannot provide insight into the cognitive and behavioural processes of how an individual constitutes the world and filters narratives why and in which way. Further to this, while research on ‘affective communities’ (Hutchison 2016) and collective identities (Alexander ed. 2004; Giesen 2004; Kantsteiner 2002; Langenbacher and Shain 2010; Polletta and Jasper 2001) has attempted to explain the link between individual sensemaking processes and a collective’s shared and affective experience, many questions remain unanswered.

Further research that takes on the mammoth task of understanding narrative reception requires both a commitment to quantitative and qualitative data but, as argued here, above all, a commitment to narrative analysis. More recent attempts have made use of the Q-sort method to examine how individuals configure which narratives (see Miskimmon and O’Loughlin 2019), which is a starting point for engaging with more consistent and systematic research on audiences more broadly. Future research on the reasons for which identity narratives ‘stick’ (Ibid.) will need to engage with audiences as participants and narrators in an event’s complex sensemaking processes. How audiences come to understand events is not

merely through political actors or media narratives. In acknowledging audiences as active agents within the narrative cycle, future research needs to consider how audiences ‘become actors in their own right’ (Hanshew 2016, p. 386) in the ‘theater of fear’ (de Graaf in *Ibid.*). More research, for example, could uncover motivations for taking part in rituals that seek to express solidarity, or how actors come to understand certain events as significant through engaging more in-depth narrative analysis of oral history (Aharon 2020; Gardini 2012; Leavy 2007; Sangster 1994).

Further research on anchors more generally could also explore options of engaging different anchors in a comparative perspective and could seek to understand which event groups share similar anchors. For example, scholars could explore whether anchors around terrorist crisis events are similar to those in natural catastrophes, or pandemics and where they differ. Likewise, scholars could deploy the different anchors in a comparative perspective between different ‘affective communities’ (Hutchison 2016) around the same event and where they differ or overlap. While this research has included some visual data, it recognises that it has done so insufficiently. Further research should include the role of visual imagery in the construction of anchors (Eroukhmanoff 2019) and how visuals enable agency by undermining settled anchors. It follows that the possible application of different anchors to a wide range of empirical cases, through multiple methods and from a variety of perspectives, makes the concept of anchors an indispensable tool to re-think agency in IR and for identity narratives.

## 7.4. Discussion and Conclusion

The political purchase and significance of how political actors engage and interact with crises are crucial because they tie closely to the affect landscape of societies and, therefore, also harbours, conciliatory or bellicose potential. While this thesis will not be able to solve persistent structural inequalities, or, structural silences, it has sought to demonstrate instead, which processes underlie them. ‘Discursive anchors’ (Homolar and Rodríguez-Merino 2019, p. 561) are thus a means to ‘see’ (*Ibid.*, p. 575) event groups through certain characteristic features and tie them to specific responses and self-conceptualisations. When they are used to settle uncertainties, political actors carry a power to redescribe the *Self*, also in relation to the *Other*, through them. In this process, political actors and audiences also carry the potential to find new ways to settle uncertainties around anchors that are less harmful to democracy. In doing so, they could potentially encourage ‘creative-constitutive agency’ (Berenskoetter 2020, p. 282) in engaging with new narratives that embrace the complexity of the world – be

it through radical agency or more silent embraces. The embrace of anxiety, then, does not have to mean falling back into the rhythm of routine practices but could help, instead, to approach the study of events – almost radically – from the angle of curiosity.

This thesis has principally argued that the narration of ‘critical situations’ (Ejdus 2020, p. 2) enables agency of political actors to negotiate identity narratives of a given collective, in this research, the state. In bringing forward the core assumption that change and continuity depend on perspective, this thesis has further engaged a narrative reading of change and continuity. It has put forward the assumption that scholars should focus on where political actors narrate movement to existing narrative structures through the narration of short-term episodes. In doing so, it has argued that the different anchors facilitate the analysis of how critical events can provide a space for the negotiation of state identity narratives through processes of setting anchors around them. In doing so, this thesis has further argued that identity narratives ‘establish who we are’ (Polletta 1998b, p. 141). They ‘may be employed strategically to strengthen a collective identity’ and they ‘may precede and make possible the development of a coherent community, nation, or collective actor’.

The ‘haunting mark’ (Debrix 2007, p. 138) of ruptures has been the starting point for engaging with a theorisation of the event in IR research; a theorisation that is needed given the lack of event theorisation in IR. This thesis has suggested that the link of scholarship on strategic narratives (Miskimmon, O’Loughlin and Roselle 2013) to a narrative reading of events and the compelling arguments made in ontological security research (Browning 2016; Ejdus 2018; Kinnvall 2004a; 2007; Kinnvall and Mitzen 2017; Mitzen 2006a; Steele 2005; 2008a; 2008b), can provide a better analytical and conceptual grasp of agency in the process of negotiating narrative structures. As narratives thrive on the encounter of the friction between the known and the unknown, agency thrives when actors negotiate this friction. The finding in this research is, then, that engaging the concept of strategic narratives around the core notions of anxiety, temporality, affect and identity can re-engage a discussion of the core concepts in IR while advancing their agentic reading. In doing so, this thesis has demonstrated that an agentic reading of these concepts can help the scholarship in examining central questions on change and continuity, agency and structure and an event’s singularity and series. The link between strategic narratives and ontological security has thus enabled an agentic reading of identity negotiation processes and how this link successfully responds to calls for engaging agency in the scholarship on ontological security more fruitfully.

Affect has also proven to be an important factor for practices of anchoring uncertainty, not least where anchors can stipulate affective responses. Affect has played a role not only in

providing a grasp of the relevance of an event but also for how narratives bind a collective in suffering, solidarity and more generally foster ‘affective communities’ (Hutchison 2016).

The mobilisation of history and the projection of narratives are complicated, and the research in this thesis has shown that media ecologies play a crucial role in how events are witnessed, narrated, and narratives projected and received. Any study that takes a commitment to strategic narrative research and ontological security in processes of identity narrative negotiation seriously, will have to factor media ecologies into the analysis. While this thesis has focused on examining how ‘skilful political actors learn how to harness’ power through media logics and ‘grasp that power works *through* this’ (O’Loughlin, Miskimmon and Roselle 2017, p. 36, italics in original), it has also shown that intentional narrative projection is incredibly difficult.

Where the reconstitution of live witnessing in global news flows translates into a new kind of eyewitnessing (Mortensen 2015a; 2015c; Vis et al. 2014) ‘participants contribute to the flow of information from man-made and natural catastrophe by producing and distributing images on a large scale’ (Mortensen 2015b, p. 1394). In this way, they also engage with and decisively influence, the writing of events not least in carrying identity narrative commitments forward. The development of technological means to share affective responses, but also to witness events, has further ‘played an important role in reshaping the public’s understanding of news events that were traditionally framed through mass media, enabling discourses that at times counter mainstream media narratives’ (Bruns and Hanusch 2017, pp. 1122-1123). Does this negate the possibilities to ‘arrest’ (Hoskins and O’Loughlin 2015) events? Has the interactive and global nature of this new kind of eyewitnessing not turned the third phase of mediatization into an even more complex media jungle than before? Further to this, did virality and spreadability (Jenkins et al., 2013) not produce an even more diffused media landscape? Simply put: can the changing nature of witnessing and participation in global media events be arrested at all?

Andrew Hoskins and Ben O’Loughlin (2015, p. 1321) address this aspect, stating that ‘virality and spreadability ... are not part of a sustainable, user-generated phenomenon, but are ultimately arrested by the mainstream’. In this way, even when affective publics change how scholars think about media and events, political actors and mainstream media have found a way to strategically harness the seemingly diffused logic of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century media ecology. This research has further shown that while media and social media sensemaking in the media ecology of the ‘Arrested War’ (Hoskins and O’Loughlin 2015) appears unpredictable, anchors around event groups can produce descriptive, emotional and ritualistic patterns and thus

‘arrest’ (Ibid.) practices of meaning-making. In arresting practices of meaning-making anchors can re-establish an element of predictability that appeared lost during the media ecology of the ‘Diffused War’ (Ibid. 2010).

While events can be arrested through anchors, it is crucial to acknowledge the complexity of how narratives engage with and reflect on counternarratives by political and other actors. The projection of narratives is always and inherently complex, and processes of contestation are always possible and, indeed, likely. It follows that media ecologies do not decide on whether contestation is possible but instead influence which, where and how counternarratives emerge. Further, while the 21<sup>st</sup>-century media ecology may provide new, additional and international outlets through which alternative narratives can emerge, they do not necessarily provide, or make use of the potential of, alternative narratives.

More generally, this thesis finds that the narration of causal transformation is integral to an agentic reading of identity narrative negotiation. It is the task of narrative analysis to extract and analyse these links, that is, where an actor speaks to the anxiety of the state’s place in the world. References to the ontological status of the state causally link proposed movement in identity narratives to the pursuit of strategic interest through time. In this way, the production of identity narratives is a reflexive process contingent on the transformative capability of causal links between events and the state’s purview of agency as narrated by actors.

From a more ideological inclination, democracy itself is carried forward by identity narratives that express a commitment to and identification with it. In a day and age where many of the agreed-upon democratic principles are being questioned, it is even more important to understand how actors can carry these identity commitments forward and how other actors seek to negotiate them.

# Appendix

## A: List of Abbreviations

AfD:	Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany)
ARD:	Das Erste
BKA:	Bundeskriminalamt (Federal Police Agency)
CDA:	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDU:	Christlich Demokratische Union (Christian Democratic Party)
CSFP:	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSU:	Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern (Christian Social Union)
DIP:	Dokumentations- und Informationssystem für Parlamentarische Vorgänge (Documentation and Information System for Parliamentary Procedures)
EU:	European Union
FAZ:	Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung
FDP:	Freie Demokratische Partei (Free Democratic Party)
GTAZ:	Gemeinsames Terrorismusabwehrzentrum (Joint Counter-Terrorism Centre)
IR:	International Relations
ISAF:	International Security Assistance Force for Afghanistan
LuftSiG:	Luftsicherheitsgesetz (Law on Aviation Security)
MBFR:	Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions
NSU:	Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund (National Socialist Underground)
OEF:	Operation Enduring Freedom
RAF:	Red Army Faction
RTL:	Radio Télévision Luxembourg
SALT:	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SDS:	Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (German Association of Socialist Students)
SPD:	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland (Social Democratic Party)
UK:	United Kingdom
US:	United States
ZDF:	Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen
ZFAS:	Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik

## B: List of Parliamentary Debates

### Chapter 4: The Schleyer Kidnapping

Legislative Period 8 (14.12.76 – 04.11.80), Chancellor Helmut Schmidt

*99 parliamentary debates*

Year	Plenary Protocol	Date	Location
1976	Plenary Protocol No. 08/5	16 December 1976	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/9	21 January 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/13	09 February 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/14	10 February 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/15	02 March 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/17	16 March 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/18	17 March 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/22	20 April 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/25	05 May 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/27	13 May 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/31	15 June 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/33	17 June 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/34	21 June 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/35	22 June 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/37	24 June 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/39	08 September 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/42	15 September 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/43	28 September 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/44	29 September 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/46	05 October 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/47	06 October 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/48	07 October 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/49	19 October 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/50	20 October 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/52	27 October 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/53	28 October 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/54	09 November 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/55	10 November 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/59	25 November 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/60	07 December 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/61	08 December 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/62	14 December 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1977	Plenary Protocol No. 08/63	15 December 1977	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/65	19 January 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/66	20 January 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/67	24 January 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/68	25 January 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/70	27 January 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag

1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/72	16 February 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/73	17 February 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/74	22 February 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/79	10 March 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/81	16 March 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/82	12 April 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/83	13 April 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/84	14 April 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/85	19 April 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/86	20 April 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/87	26 April 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/88	27 April 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/90	11 May 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/93	01 June 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/95	08 June 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/96	09 June 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/98	15 June 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/100	22 June 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/101	23 June 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/103	20 September 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/104	21 September 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/109	05 October 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/117	16 November 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/119	29 November 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/120	30 November 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1978	Plenary Protocol No. 08/122	06 December 1978	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/132	25 January 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/133	26 January 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/134	07 February 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/135	08 February 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/136	09 February 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/138	15 February 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/145	29 March 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/149	27 April 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/159	13 June 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/160	20 June 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/163	27 June 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/164	28 June 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/165	01 July 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/168	12 September 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/172	20 September 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/178	12 October 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/182	07 November 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/186	15 November 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/190	30 November 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/193	13 December 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag

1979	Plenary Protocol No. 08/194	14 December 1979	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 08/196	17 January 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 08/197	18 January 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 08/200	25 January 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 08/201	13 February 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 08/216	13 May 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 08/218	22 May 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 08/219	23 May 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 08/220	12 June 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 08/223	18 June 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 08/224	19 June 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 08/225	25 June 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 08/226	26 June 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 08/228	02 July 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 08/230	04 July 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag

Legislative Period 9 (14.11.80 – 29.03.83), Chancellor Helmut Schmidt  
*31 parliamentary debates*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Plenary Protocol</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 09/5	24 November 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 09/8	28 November 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1980	Plenary Protocol No. 09/10	11 December 1980	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1981	Plenary Protocol No. 09/18	29 January 1981	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1981	Plenary Protocol No. 09/21	12 February 1981	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1981	Plenary Protocol No. 09/24	20 February 1981	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1981	Plenary Protocol No. 09/26	19 March 1981	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1981	Plenary Protocol No. 09/31	09 April 1981	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1981	Plenary Protocol No. 09/32	10 April 1981	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1981	Plenary Protocol No. 09/41	03 June 1981	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1981	Plenary Protocol No. 09/46	25 June 1981	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1981	Plenary Protocol No. 09/48	09 September 1981	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1981	Plenary Protocol No. 09/53	18 September 1981	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1981	Plenary Protocol No. 09/55	01 October 1981	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1981	Plenary Protocol No. 09/62	29 October 1981	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1981	Plenary Protocol No. 09/66	25 November 1981	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1981	Plenary Protocol No. 09/70	03 December 1981	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1982	Plenary Protocol No. 09/77	15 January 1982	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1982	Plenary Protocol No. 09/78	19 January 1982	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1982	Plenary Protocol No. 09/80	21 January 1982	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1982	Plenary Protocol No. 09/86	11 February 1982	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1982	Plenary Protocol No. 09/95	26 March 1982	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1982	Plenary Protocol No. 09/100	13 May 1982	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1982	Plenary Protocol No. 09/104	28 May 1982	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1982	Plenary Protocol No. 09/105	09 June 1982	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1982	Plenary Protocol No. 09/107	23 June 1982	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag

1982	Plenary Protocol No. 09/108	24 June 1982	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1982	Plenary Protocol No. 09/118	01 October 1982	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1982	Plenary Protocol No. 09/122	14 October 1982	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1982	Plenary Protocol No. 09/138	14 December 1982	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag
1982	Plenary Protocol No. 09/139	15 December 1982	Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag

### Chapter 5: 9/11

Legislative Period 14 (26.10.98 – 17.10.02), Chancellor Gerhard Schröder

*94 parliamentary debates*

Year	Plenary Protocol No.	Date	Location
1998	Plenary Protocol No. 14/5	12 November 1998	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
1999	Plenary Protocol No. 14/18	27 January 1999	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
1999	Plenary Protocol No. 14/21	14 February 1999	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
1999	Plenary Protocol No. 14/20	23 February 1999	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
1999	Plenary Protocol No. 14/27	18 March 1999	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
1999	Plenary Protocol No. 14/28	19 March 1999	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
1999	Plenary Protocol No. 14/29	24 March 1999	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
1999	Plenary Protocol No. 14/31	26 March 1999	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
1999	Plenary Protocol No. 14/39	06 May 1999	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
1999	Plenary Protocol No. 14/55	16 September 1999	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
1999	Plenary Protocol No. 14/58	30 September 1999	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
1999	Plenary Protocol No. 14/61	07 October 1999	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
1999	Plenary Protocol No. 14/64	29 October 1999	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
1999	Plenary Protocol No. 14/66	04 November 1999	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
1999	Plenary Protocol No. 14/69	11 November 1999	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
1999	Plenary Protocol No. 14/72	24 November 1999	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
1999	Plenary Protocol No. 14/77	03 December 1999	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2000	Plenary Protocol No. 14/83	26 January 2000	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2000	Plenary Protocol No. 14/85	28 January 2000	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2000	Plenary Protocol No. 14/93	16 March 2000	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2000	Plenary Protocol No. 14/99	13 April 2000	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2000	Plenary Protocol No. 14/108	08 June 2000	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2000	Plenary Protocol No. 14/111	29 June 2000	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2000	Plenary Protocol No. 14/124	12 October 2000	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2000	Plenary Protocol No. 14/141	08 December 2000	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/142	17 January 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/145	24 January 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/154	07 March 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/155	08 March 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/158	15 March 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/164	05 April 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/167	10 May 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/168	11 May 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/169	16 May 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/170	17 May 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag

2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/172	30 May 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/177	22 June 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/180	29 June 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/186	12 September 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/187	19 September 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/188	25 September 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/189	26 September 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/190	27 September 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/191	10 October 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/192	11 October 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/193	12 October 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/194	17 October 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/195	18 October 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/196	19 October 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/197	07 November 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/198	08 November 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/199	09 November 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/201	15 November 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/202	16 November 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/203	27 November 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/204	28 November 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/205	29 November 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/206	30 November 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/207	12 December 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/208	13 December 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/209	14 December 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2001	Plenary Protocol No. 14/210	22 December 2001	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/211	23 January 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/212	24 January 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/213	25 January 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/215	31 January 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/217	20 February 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/218	21 February 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/219	22 February 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/220	27 February 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/221	28 February 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/222	01 March 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/223	13 March 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/224	14 March 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/225	15 March 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/227	21 March 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/228	22 March 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/230	18 April 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/233	25 April 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/234	26 April 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/235	15 May 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag

2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/236	16 May 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/238	05 June 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/239	06 June 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/240	07 June 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/242	13 June 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/243	14 June 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/245	27 June 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/246	28 June 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/248	04 July 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/249	05 July 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/250	25 July 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/252	12 September 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 14/253	13 September 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag

Legislative Period 15 (17.10.02 – 18.10.05), Chancellor Gerhard Schröder  
*110 parliamentary debates*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Plenary Protocol No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 15/1	17 October 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 15/4	29 October 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 15/7	06 November 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 15/8	07 November 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 15/9	13 November 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 15/10	14 November 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 15/11	15 November 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 15/13	04 December 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 15/15	18 December 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 15/16	19 December 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2002	Plenary Protocol No. 15/17	20 December 2002	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/19	16 January 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/21	29 January 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/22	30 January 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/24	12 February 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/25	13 February 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/27	19 February 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/31	13 March 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/33	18 March 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/34	19 March 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/35	20 March 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/36	02 April 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/37	03 April 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/40	10 April 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/41	11 April 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/42	07 May 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/43	08 May 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/44	09 May 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag

2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/46	22 May 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/48	05 June 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/51	18 June 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/53	26 June 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/56	03 July 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/57	04 July 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/58	09 September 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/59	10 September 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/60	11 September 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/63	25 September 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/66	16 October 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/67	17 October 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/68	22 October 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/69	23 October 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/70	24 October 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/72	06 November 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/73	07 November 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/75	13 November 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/76	14 November 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/78	26 November 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/79	27 November 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2003	Plenary Protocol No. 15/82	11 December 2003	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/85	14 January 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/86	15 January 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/91	12 February 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/92	13 February 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/94	04 March 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/96	10 March 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/97	11 March 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/98	12 March 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/99	24 March 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/100	25 March 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/101	31 March 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/102	01 April 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/104	28 April 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/105	29 April 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/106	30 April 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/108	06 May 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/111	27 May 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/112	28 May 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/114	17 June 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/115	18 June 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/116	30 June 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/117	01 July 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/118	01 July 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/121	07 September 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag

2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/122	08 September 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/123	09 September 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/124	10 September 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/126	23 September 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/127	24 September 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/129	30 September 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/132	21 October 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/133	22 October 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/134	27 October 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/135	28 October 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/136	29 October 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/138	11 November 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/139	12 November 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/140	23 November 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/141	24 November 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/145	02 December 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/146	03 December 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2004	Plenary Protocol No. 15/148	16 December 2004	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/151	20 January 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/152	21 January 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/154	27 January 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/155	28 January 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/156	16 February 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/157	17 February 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/160	24 February 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/162	09 March 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/163	10 March 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/166	17 March 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/169	14 April 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/170	15 April 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/172	21 April 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/175	12 May 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/179	03 June 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/181	16 June 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/184	30 June 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2005	Plenary Protocol No. 15/187	28 September 2005	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag

## Chapter 6: The Berlin Truck Attack

Legislative Period 18 (22.10.2013 – 24.10.2017), Chancellor Angela Merkel

*160 parliamentary debates*

Year	Protocol No.	Date	Location
2013	Plenary Protocol No. 18/2	18 November 2013	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2013	Plenary Protocol No. 18/3	28 November 2013	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/7	15 January 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/8	16 January 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag

2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/10	29 January 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/11	30 January 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/13	02 February 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/14	13 February 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/15	14 February 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/17	20 February 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/18	21 February 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/20	13 March 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/23	20 March 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/24	21 March 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/26	03 April 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/28	08 April 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/29	09 April 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/35	01 May 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/36	02 May 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/32	07 May 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/33	08 May 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/39	05 June 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/40	06 June 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/42	25 June 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/45	02 July 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/48	01 September 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/49	09 September 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/51	11 September 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/50	19 September 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/53	24 September 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/58	10 October 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/60	16 October 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/62	05 November 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/69	06 November 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/66	13 November 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/68	25 November 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/73	04 December 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/74	05 December 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/75	07 December 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2014	Plenary Protocol No. 18/76	08 December 2014	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/78	04 January 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/79	05 January 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/80	06 January 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/82	09 January 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/83	30 January 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/84	04 February 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/85	05 February 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/86	06 February 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/88	06 February 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/89	07 February 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag

2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/97	06 March 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/93	08 March 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/94	09 March 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/100	23 April 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/101	24 April 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/102	06 May 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/103	07 May 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/105	20 May 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/106	21 May 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/110	12 June 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/111	17 June 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/112	18 June 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/113	19 June 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/114	01 July 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/115	02 July 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/117	17 July 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/118	19 August 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/119	08 September 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/120	09 September 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/124	24 September 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/128	02 October 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/129	14 October 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/130	15 October 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/131	16 October 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/132	04 November 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/133	05 November 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/135	11 November 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/136	12 November 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/138	24 November 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/139	25 November 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/141	27 November 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/142	02 December 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/143	03 December 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/144	04 December 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/145	16 December 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2015	Plenary Protocol No. 18/146	17 December 2015	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/148	13 January 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/149	14 January 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/150	15 January 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/151	27 January 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/152	28 January 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/153	29 January 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/154	17 February 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/155	18 February 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/157	24 February 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/160	16 March 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag

2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/161	17 March 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/163	13 April 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/164	14 April 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/165	15 April 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/166	27 April 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/169	11 May 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/170	12 May 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/172	01 June 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/173	02 June 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/176	09 June 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/177	10 June 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/178	22 June 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/179	23 June 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/180	24 June 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/181	28 June 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/182	06 July 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/183	07 July 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/184	08 July 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/185	06 September 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/186	07 September 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/188	09 September 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/189	21 September 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/190	22 September 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/191	23 September 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/193	29 September 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/194	30 September 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/196	20 October 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/197	21 October 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/198	09 November 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/199	10 November 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/201	22 November 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/202	23 November 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/204	25 November 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/205	30 November 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/206	01 December 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/207	02 December 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/208	14 December 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2016	Plenary Protocol No. 18/209	15 December 2016	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/211	18 January 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/212	19 January 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/213	20 January 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/214	25 January 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/215	26 January 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/216	27 January 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/218	16 February 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/219	17 February 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag

2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/220	08 March 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/221	09 March 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/223	22 March 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/225	23 March 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/228	30 March 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/230	26 April 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/231	27 April 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/234	18 May 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/235	19 May 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/237	01 June 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/238	02 June 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/239	21 June 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/240	22 June 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/241	23 June 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/242	28 June 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/243	29 June 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/244	30 June 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 18/245	05 September 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag

### Legislative Period 19 (24.10.2017 – 31.12.2019\*) Chancellor Merkel

\* Legislative period ongoing

87 parliamentary debates

Year	Plenary Protocol	Date	Location
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 19/2	21 November 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 19/3	22 November 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 19/4	12 December 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2017	Plenary Protocol No. 19/5	13 December 2017	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/7	18 January 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/10	31 January 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/11	01 February 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/13	21 February 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/14	22 February 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/15	23 February 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/16	28 February 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/17	01 March 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/20	15 March 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/21	16 March 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/22	21 March 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/23	22 March 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/24	23 March 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/26	19 April 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/27	20 April 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/28	25 April 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/29	26 April 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/30	27 April 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag

2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/31	15 May 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/32	16 May 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/36	07 June 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/37	08 June 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/40	15 June 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/42	28 June 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/43	29 June 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/44	03 July 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/45	04 July 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/49	13 September 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/51	26 September 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/52	27 September 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/55	11 October 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/56	12 October 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/57	17 October 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/58	18 October 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/59	19 October 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/61	08 November 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/62	09 November 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/63	20 November 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/67	28 November 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/68	29 November 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2018	Plenary Protocol No. 19/70	12 December 2018	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/76	30 January 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/78	01 February 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/80	14 February 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/83	21 February 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/85	13 March 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/86	14 March 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/87	15 March 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/88	20 March 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/89	21 March 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/91	03 April 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/92	04 April 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/93	05 April 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/94	10 April 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/95	11 April 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/97	08 May 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/98	09 May 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/100	15 May 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/101	16 May 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/102	17 May 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/104	06 June 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/107	27 June 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/108	28 June 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/109	24 July 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag

2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/111	11 September 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/112	12 September 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/114	25 September 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/115	26 September 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/117	16 October 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/118	17 October 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/119	18 October 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/120	23 October 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/121	24 October 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/123	06 November 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/124	07 November 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/125	08 November 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/127	14 November 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/130	27 November 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/131	28 November 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/133	11 December 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/136	18 December 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/137	19 December 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag
2019	Plenary Protocol No. 19/138	20 December 2019	Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag

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