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**The suppression of right-wing extremism –
a challenge for society as a whole**
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**State of research and research gaps
with regard to the phenomenon of right-wing extremism –
an overview**

Abstract

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When looking at the abundance of publications on the issue of "right-wing extremism", one might think that this field of research has been thoroughly explored. However, quantity is not always accompanied by quality. Various "types of literature" can actually be distinguished, including publications by authorities as well as journalistic, political and scientific publications. Except for ideologically motivated descriptions committed to convictions rather than reality, significant findings on the development of right-wing extremism can be deduced from the other publications. For methodical reasons, however, they all remain limited: The assessments made by authorities are often limited to a presentation of facts without providing a more detailed analytical evaluation, the journalistic publications usually remain stuck in a superficial-subjective dimension and the scientific works fail to consider certain aspects of right-wing extremism.

The latter actually explains why that section of the right-wing spectrum which acts legally and openly has been studied relatively well. That section primarily includes the political parties, on which a multitude of publications in the form of case studies and general descriptions are available today. This does not apply to violent-prone elements of the scene that are isolated from the public and not firmly organised. With the exception of a few research studies based, for example, on the analysis of court records regarding pertinent violent offenders or in-depth interviews of members of the neo-Nazi scene, there is a lack of relevant publications concerning this field. This is also due to the fact that the analytical skills of social scientists have not been and still are not being linked to the intelligence obtained by the security agencies. Especially in view of the phenomenon of "Autonomous Nationalists" (AN), which is also marked by a strong propensity to use violence, cooperation between authorities and the scientific community is required in this regard.

Another idea is to establish "analysis units" with competent social scientists at the security agencies, an example of which is the Terrorism/Extremism Research Unit at the BKA. This unit, however, represents an exception rather than a rule. Such "analysis units" could examine developments in the field of right-wing extremism not only in the light of social science research. With regard to the perspective of an "early warning system", comparative research into extremism is also relevant for the authorities and the scientific community: Developments in Islamism and left-wing extremism can sometimes also be observed in the field of right-wing extremism as regards actions and organisational structures. The formation of the AN as a "copy" of the left-wing extremist autonomists stands for this development just as well as the structure of the NSU, which has formal fea-

tures in common with action concepts known from German left-wing and American right-wing terrorism.