

Class 9: Aspects of Social Movement Activity

State responses

Dr. Michael C. Zeller

Agenda for the day

- Opening notes
- State responses
- Poll: State responses
- Research closer look
- Any questions, concerns, feedback for this class?

Opening notes



Presentations line-up

Date	Presenters	Method
4 Dec:	Daichi, Seongyeon, Jehyun	ethnography
18 Dec:	Ayla, Tara, Theresa, Annabelle	TBD
15 Jan:	Luna, Emilene, Raffa, Sofia	TBD

State responses

- opening questions
- overview
- one policy change example
- repression/social control
- DE state responses to climate movement
 - FFF and LG



How (in what different ways) can
state actors respond to
movements?

Who/which state actor is taking
action? What kind of action is it?
How visible is it?

State responses overview

- ignore / dismiss
- oppose
- accommodate

State responses overview

- ignore / dismiss
- oppose
 - close opportunities ('problem depletion')
 - 'channel', restrict access to resources
 - repress, apply force
- accommodate
 - encourage institutionalisation
 - engage in relevant decision-making processes
 - change policy

Movements and policy change (Jones 2022)

anyone know what this place is?



Movements and policy change (Jones 2022)

historical memory Spain

historical memory Hungary

- Valley of the Fallen (incl., Catholic basilica), outside Madrid
- monument constructed under Franco, using forced/convict labour
- burial place for Franco (exhumed 24.10.2019) and Primo de Rivera (exhumed 23.4.2023)



Ley de Memoria Histórica: recognises and broadens “the rights and establishes measures in favour of those who suffered

3 dimensions of repression/social control (Earl 2003)

Identity of repressive agent	State agents tightly connected with national political elites (e.g., military units)	State agents loosely connected with national political elites (e.g., local police departments)	Private agents (e.g., counter-demonstrators)
Character of repressive action	Coercion (e.g., use of tear gas and rubber bullets)	Channelling (e.g., restrictions on registered organisations)	
Whether repressive action is observable	Observable (i.e., overt; e.g., Tiananmen Square)	Unobserved (i.e., covert or latent; e.g., COINTELPRO)	

What sort of repression/social control in cases do you know of? Was it effective? Why/How?

DE climate movement - FFF



Der Mitorganisator der "Fridays For Future-Bewegung", Jakob Blasel aus Kronshagen, stellte am Dienstag die Forderungen der Bewegung für den Schutz des Klimas persönlich an die Bundeskanzlerin.
© Quelle: dpa



Das Gespräch am Rande des UN-Klimagipfels

Foto: dpa

- March 2019: Chancellor Merkel praises FFF ([link](#))
- April 2019: government minister (for Economy and Energy, Peter Altmeier) requests to speak at FFF demo (rejected by organisers) ([link](#))
- August 2020: Chancellor Merkel meets with FFF representatives ([link](#))
- March 2021: constitutional court (*Bundesverfassungsgericht*) declares federal climate protection law (*Bundes-Klimaschutzgesetz*) insufficient, requiring more government action
- influence on United Nations Climate Change conferences, COPs 25-28

DE climate movement - Letzte Generation

- 2022: Green party (potential elite allies) distance themselves from LG
- December 2022/May 2023: police searches of LG properties, related to prosecutions ([link](#) and [link](#))



- April 2023: violent police tactics to remove blockaders ([link](#))
 - ‘pain grips’ (*Schmerzgriffe*): wristlocks and other ‘control/restraint holds’
- use of **preventive detention** in Bayern ([link](#)) and calls for it elsewhere by police union chief ([link](#))
- politicians, some from governing parties, referring to ‘climate terrorists’ (*Klimaterroristen*) and ‘climate RAF’ (*Klima-RAF*)

Poll: State responses

LMU

LUDWIG-
MAXIMILIANS-
UNIVERSITÄT
MÜNCHEN



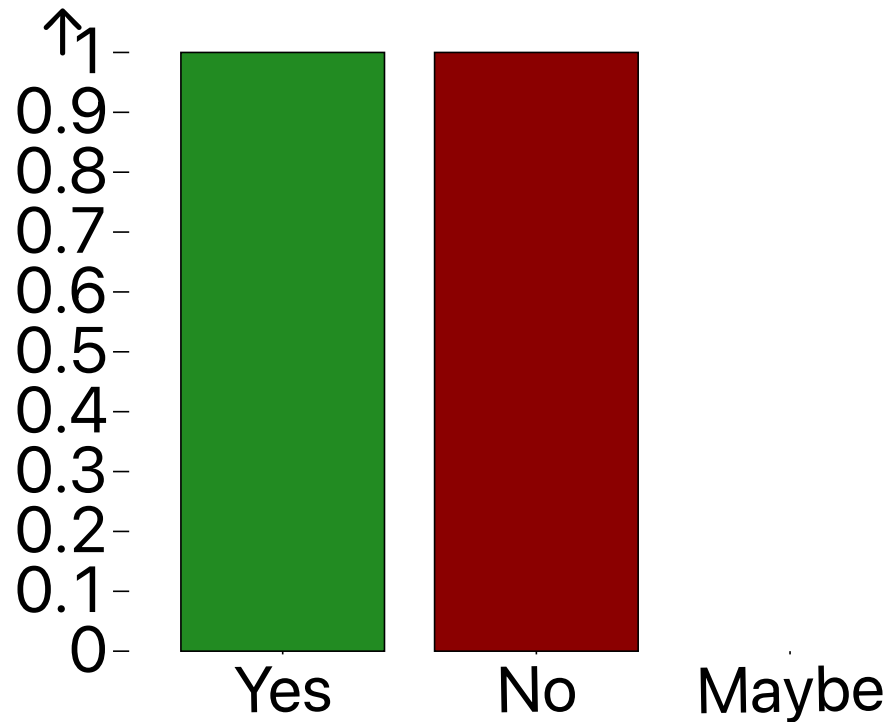
Take the survey at

<https://forms.gle/jkBAGEAx5Ub9>

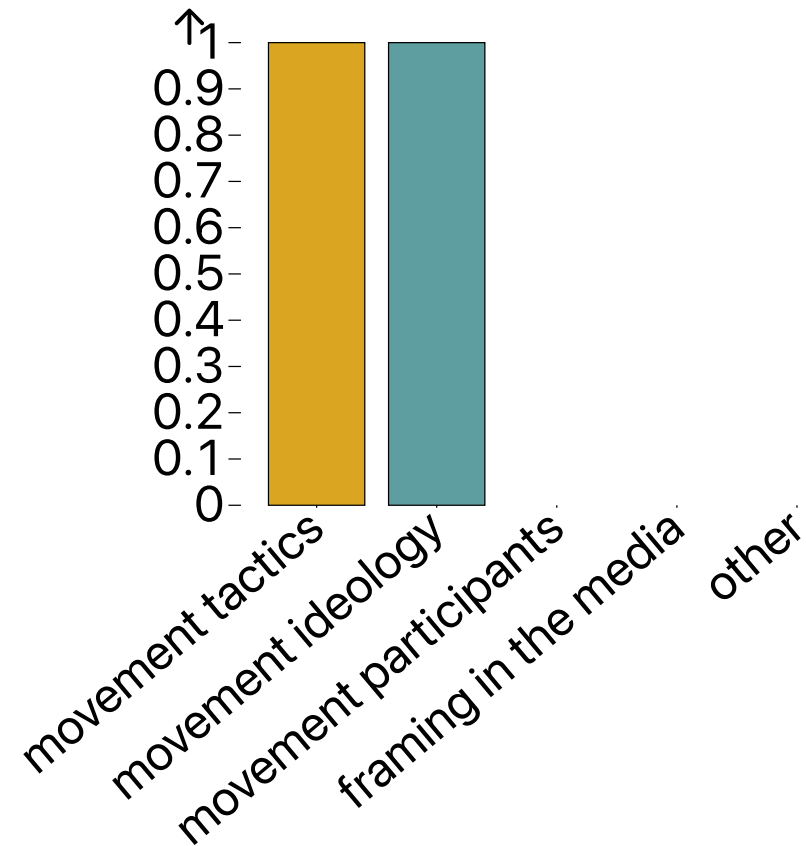
- good when state agrees to protest demands?
 - non-violent protest inviolable?
 - state response to movement disruption of services?
-
- is state surveillance of a movement ever acceptable?
 - what determines whether movement treated as 'threatening'?
 - what typically happens after a state violently represses a movement?
 - states respond more harshly to 'marginalised group' movements?

Poll results (Respondents: 2)

good when state agrees to protest demands?



determines whether movement treated as 'threatening'?



Poll - harder state responses

Poll - motivated state responses

Research closer look

- Berntzen and Weisskircher (2016) - mobilisation differences and state responses
 - PEGIDA background
 - research questions and design
 - cases and data collection
 - findings
 - discussion question



PEGIDA as a 'serious civil rights movement'? (*H.C. Strache*)

PEGIDA background: a demonstration in Wien

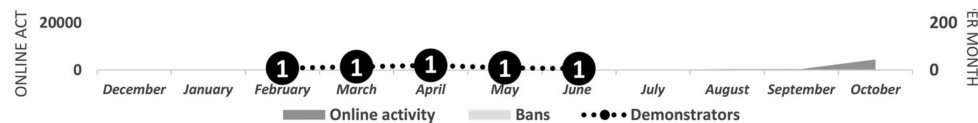
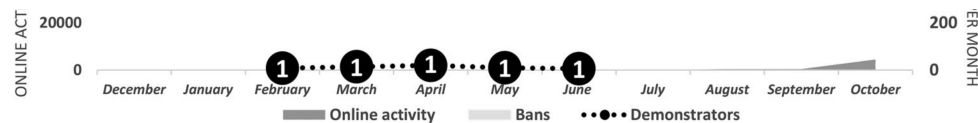
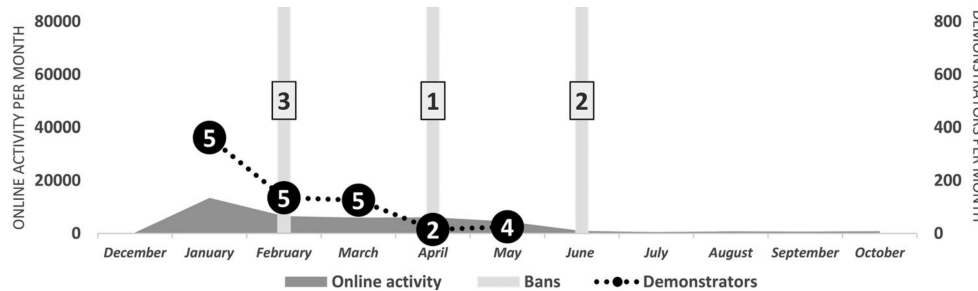
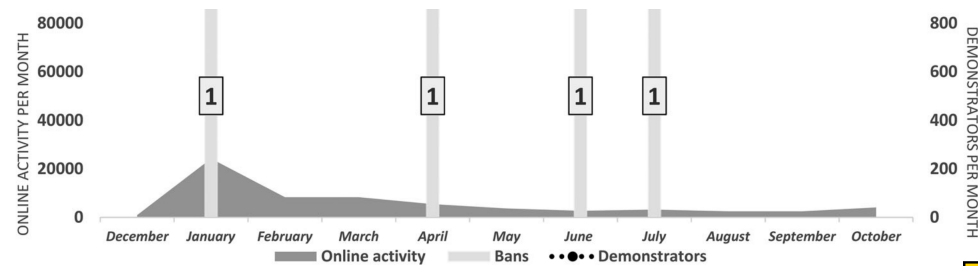
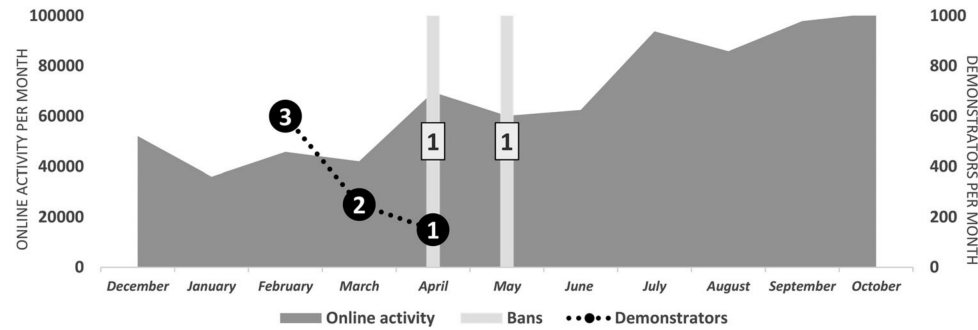
Wien, 2 February 2015

- *why did PEGIDA mobilize to some extent in Austria and Norway, while failing in Sweden and Switzerland?*

case selection: two countries from economically and culturally similar regions (German-speaking Central Europe [Switzerland and Austria] and Scandinavia [Norway and Sweden]), each with variation on the 'dependent variable' of street mobilisation

- sort of paired 'most similar systems design' (MSSD)
- key **IVs**: state bans, parliamentary strength of the radical right, counter-mobilisation by anti-racist groups
 - **why these IVs? are there other important factors? what are the hypothesised effects?**

Berntzen and Weisskircher (2016) - cases



thickness of grey stream shows aggregated online activity of PEGIDA groups. Circles indicate protest events. Number inside circle shows demos per month

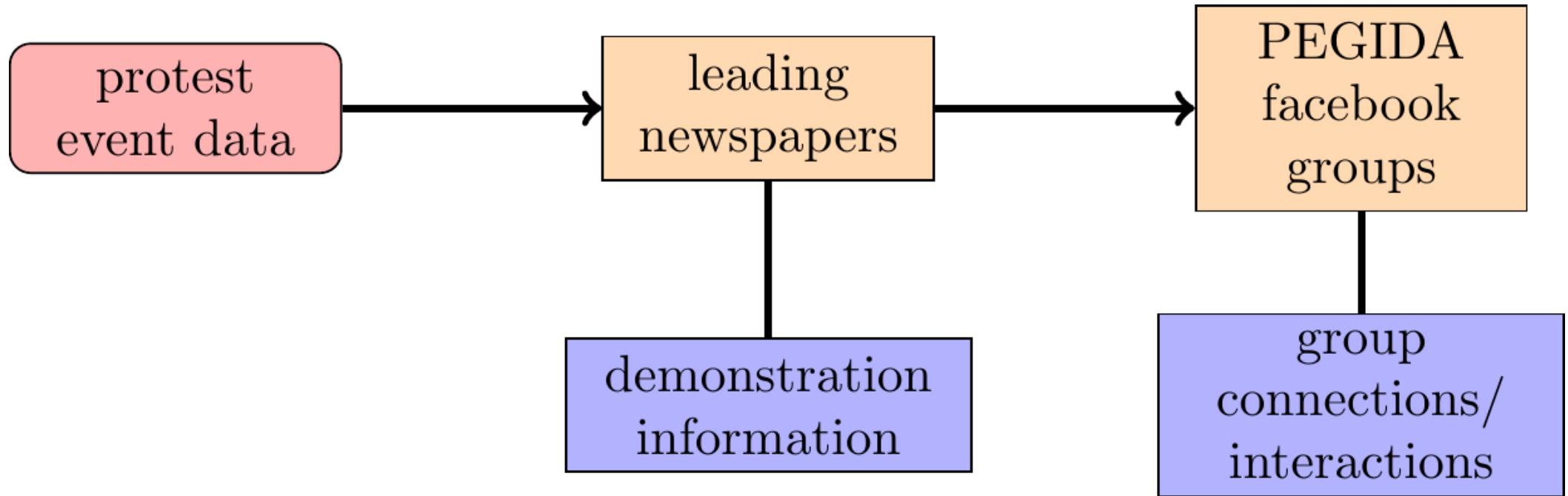
Austria: significant mobilisation

Switzerland: insignificant mobilisation

Norway: significant mobilisation

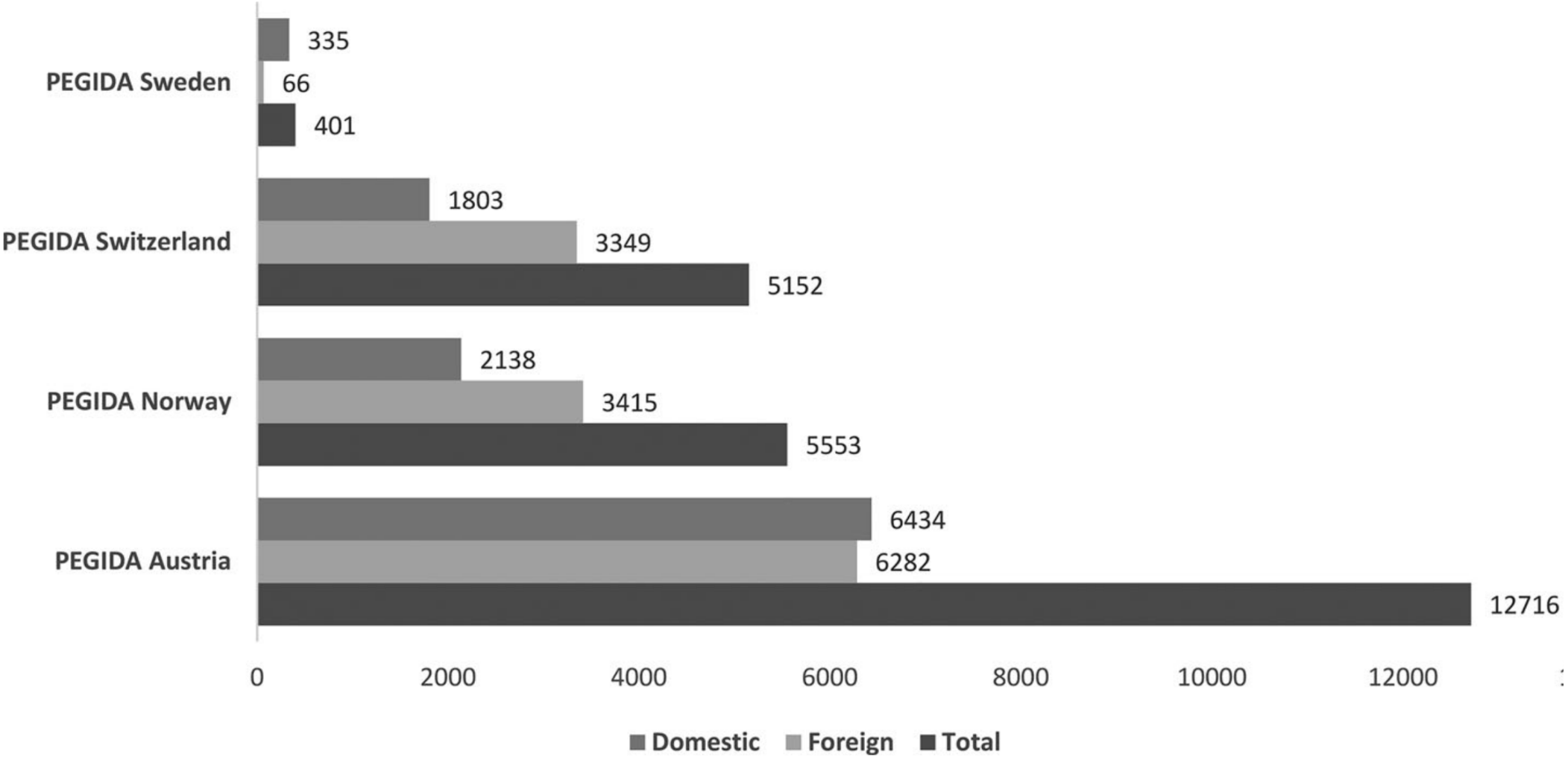
Sweden: insignificant mobilisation

Berntzen and Weisskircher (2016) - data collection



gaps in this data collection? anything other data needed?

PEGIDA Facebook memberships

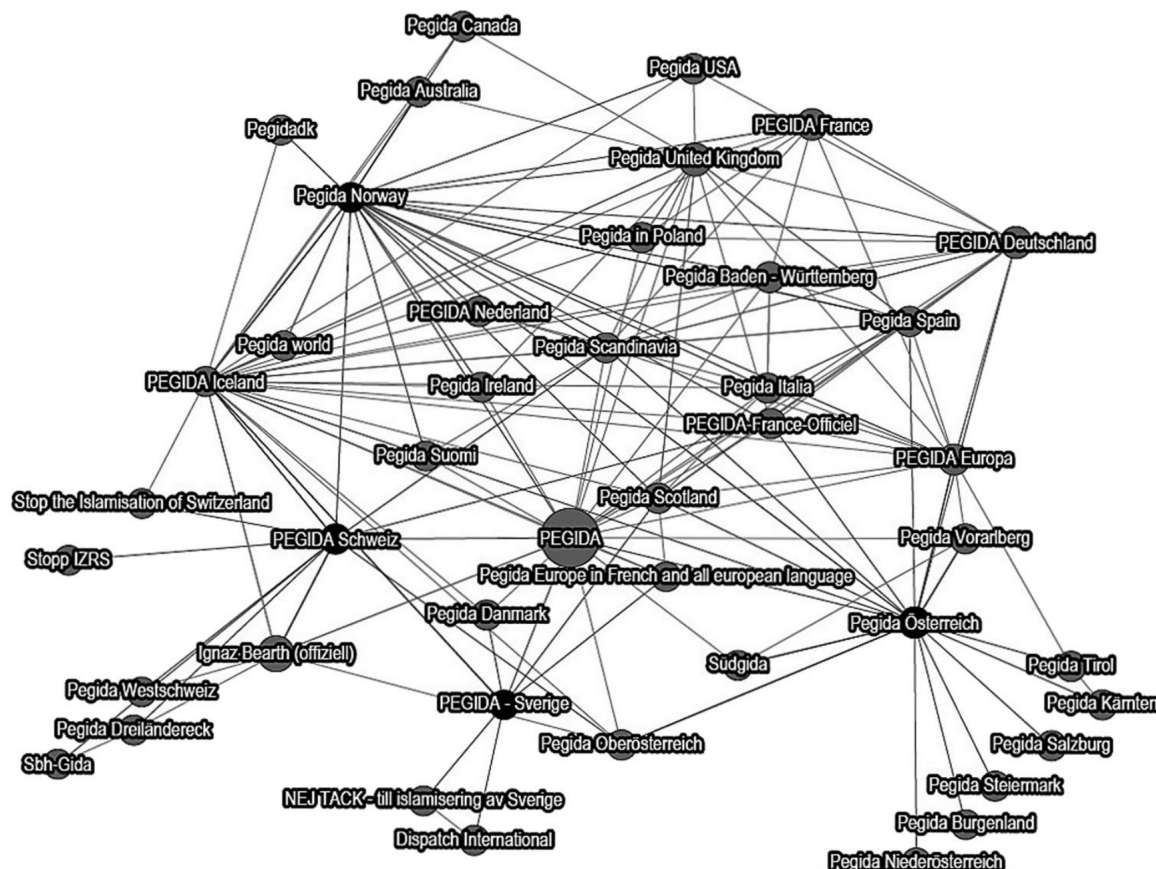


Berntzen and Weisskircher (2016) - findings

- supports *negative impact of established radical right parties on street mobilisation*
- no strong finding on **counter-mobilisation**:

“it is possible that the massive level of resistance has curtailed PEGIDA to a certain extent by making it costlier for people to march under their banner. Nevertheless, this cannot explain cross-national variation as anti-racists mobilised strongly in all four countries”

Berntzen and Weisskircher (2016) - network



Austrian group: largest, most popular (ties to 11 other PEGIDA groups)

Norwegian group: low relevance in the wider community

Swiss group: many national ties, few external ties

Swedish group: few connections

Berntzen and Weisskircher (2016) - findings

Attempts to **mobilise and spread propaganda online** by the transnational radical right are therefore **vulnerable to police and state bans**, especially if they are **put in place at an early stage** in their mobilisation efforts. This lays bare the potential for curtailing far-right activism in multiple arenas by targeting and denying them the opportunity of rallying and getting attention through street activism.

Berntzen and Weisskircher (2016) - findings

- **Sweden PEGIDA**: restrictively policed due to high counter-mobilisation
 - new mobilisation: no strong benefit of pre-existing radical right activism; in all other cases, *PEGIDA label* was used by established radical right actors
- **Switzerland PEGIDA**: protests banned by local authorities
 - banning demonstrations (offline) also negatively impacted online activism
- **Norway PEGIDA**: outgrowth of pre-existing radical right activism
 - bans on demonstrations in Oslo—also negatively impacted online activism
- **Austria PEGIDA**: deeply embedded in national and transnational far-right scene, some support from FPÖ (large, radical right political party)
 - establishing stable online presence reshapes (expands) online far-right scene
- counter-mobilisation and radical right party strength do not explain differences in mobilisation—state action (esp. banning) does
 - are you convinced by this?

All PEGIDA events in Austria were met with much greater countermobilisation. Some PEGIDA activists were reported to the police because of engagement in National Socialist activities, such as Hitler salutes.

Is counter-mobilisation needed to provoke a state response?

some random researcher strongly contending 'yes': Zeller (2021), Zeller (2022), Zeller and Vaughan (2024), Zeller (2025)

to be continued with next session, on 'counter-mobilisation'

Any questions, concerns, feedback for this class?

Anonymous feedback here: <https://forms.gle/AjHt6fcnwZxkSg4X8>

Alternatively, please send me an email: m.zeller@lmu.de

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