

Political Protest and Radicalization

Center for Civil Society Research/WZB

Abstract

Since the 1990s, public debates over immigration, integration, and religion have increasingly shaped politics in Germany. Also, the streets have seen frequent violent mobilization and counter-mobilizations related to these issues. In this project, we examine radicalization and protest dynamics from different perspectives, with particular emphasis on the interaction between Islamist, radical right- and left-wing mobilization. Overall, we deliver a systematic protest monitoring by linking three different levels of analysis:

- **Protest events:** When, where, by whom and around which topics does protest occur? What part does politically motivated violence play in the German protest arena? What spatial references and focal points both transnational and regional - can be identified regarding radical forms of protest?
- **Discursive contexts:** What are the discursive opportunity structures of political protest and radicalization? Which actors, thematic fields, and patterns of interpretation are discussed regarding radicalization in the German public sphere? Which conflicts and escalation dynamics shape the debates?
- **Radicalized actors:** Which sociostructural characteristics, life courses, group affiliations, and mobilizing structures are associated with individual radicalization processes?

In order to answer our research questions, the WZB's protest monitoring involves three closely related data collection instruments: a systematic protest event analysis (including political violence); an analysis of public debates; and a survey of the profiles of radicalized actors. Empirically, the protest monitoring is based, among other things, on media coverage in national and regional daily newspapers as well as biographical and social network data on activists involved in political violence, and it combines automated and manual methods of quantitative content analysis.

Accordingly, the creation of a data portal with three data sets is planned:

1) a database of all protest events that took place in Germany (including information on the protest form, location, time, number of participants, thematic focus, etc.) based on a semi-automated analysis of newspaper articles published in the Süddeutsche Zeitung. The database is updated annually and retrospectively corresponds with the **Prodat data set**, which covers the years 1950 - 2002. In addition, other national and regional daily newspapers are coded for the years since 2019.

2) a survey of debates in the context of protest events and radicalization in the discourse fields of migration, Islam and nationalism. At its core, the debate analysis is based on a relational form of quantitative content analysis (core sentence analysis), which assesses the visibility of the issues, the actors involved and their positions, justifications and relationships in newspaper articles since 2019. Daily newspapers are also predominantly used as sources.

3) a survey of the profiles of radicalized actors in terms of selected individual characteristics (including socio-economic, biographical, and migration-specific) and information on the mobilizing organizations and structures. This survey is based on data from open access sources and will be linked to the **Jihadist Radicalization in Europe (JRE) data set**.

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Selected Publications

Grande, Edgar/ Hunger, Sophia/ Hutter, Swen/ Kanol, Eylem/ Saldivia Gonzatti, Daniel (2022): "**Der harte Kern der Proteste**. Viele der mit den Corona-Maßnahmen Unzufriedenen tolerieren Radikalität und Gewalt". In: WZB-Mitteilungen, H. 2=Nr. 176, S. 21-23.

Kanol, Eylem/Knoesel, Johanna (2021): "**Right-Wing Extremist Mobilization in Germany**". WZB, online: <https://dx.doi.org/10.7802/2256>. (veröffentlicht).

Grande, Edgar/Hutter, Swen/Hunger, Sophia/Kanol, Eylem (2021): **Alles Covidioten?** Politische Potenziale des Corona-Protests in Deutschland. WZB Discussion Paper ZZ 2021-601. Berlin: WZB.

Grande, Edgar/ Hutter, Swen/ Hunger, Sophia/ Kanol, Eylem (2021): **"Radikale Rechte und vernachlässigte Mitte.** Politische Potenziale der Corona-Proteste in Deutschland". In: WZB-Mitteilungen, H. 171, S. 68-70.

Hunger, Sophia/Hutter, Swen (2021): **"Fridays for Future in der Corona-Krise.** Welche Mobilisierungskraft haben Online-Proteste?". In: Forschungsjournal Soziale Bewegungen, Jg. 34, H. 2, S. 218-234.

Hunger, Sophia/Völker, Teresa/Saldivia Gonzatti, Daniel (2021): **"Der Verlust der Vielfalt.** Die Corona-Proteste in Deutschland werden durch eine radikale Minderheit geprägt". In: WZB-Mitteilungen, H. 172, S. 30-32.