



Building Resilience against Violent
Extremism and Polarisation

Far-right Demonstrations in Central and Eastern Europe: tactical importance and state and societal responses

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Far-right demonstrations: utility and importance

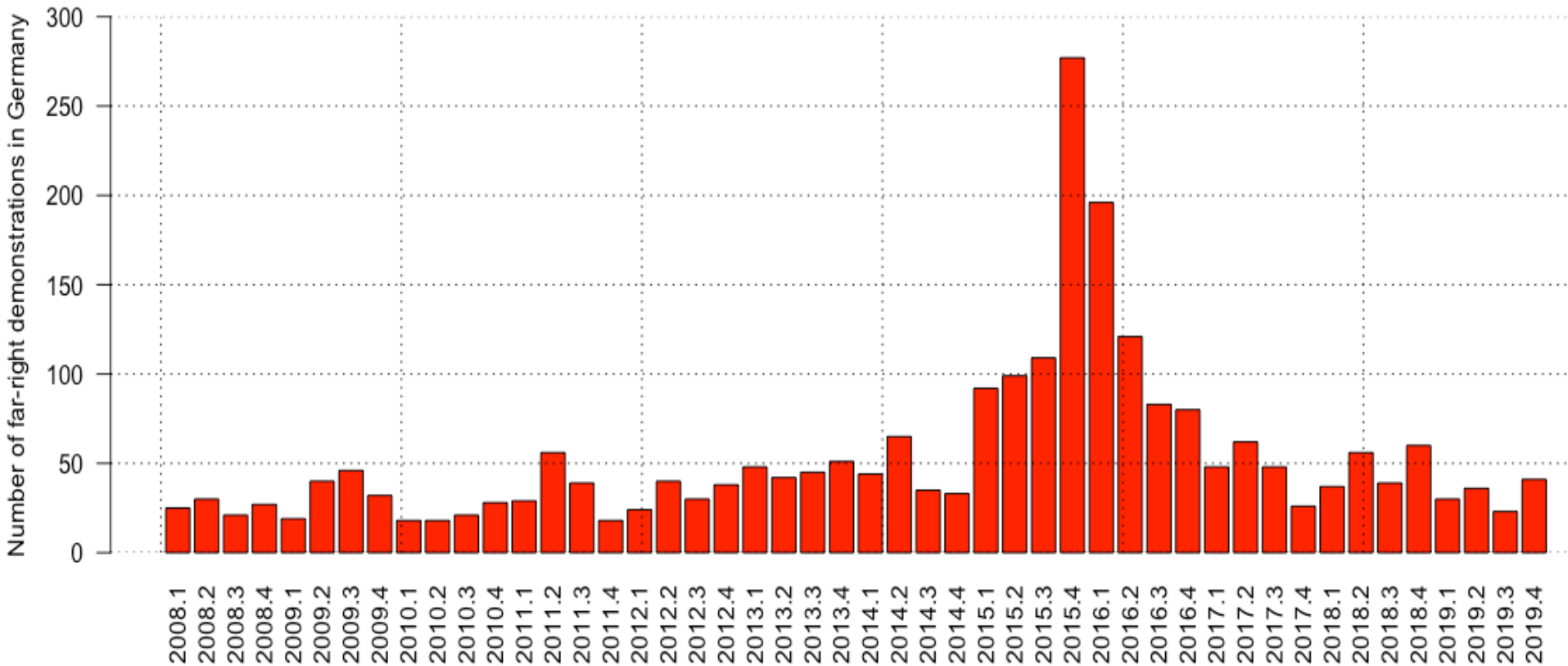
- Internally: mobilising existing members, promoting solidarity and bonding (Melucci 1996), an ‘emotional collective’ (Virchow 2006)
- Externally: attracting new members, facilitating networking, raising awareness and claiming a space in the public sphere

Far-right demonstrations: utility and importance

- A show of movement force, its numbers and capacity
- Nostalgia—recalling far-right regimes, events, and figures
- Tactical lock-in: familiarity and ideological conviction (Doherty & Hayes 2018; Staggenborg & Lecomte 2009)

Prevalence

Example of Germany, 2008 - 2020



A move to the east

- Hungary: Day of Honour (February)
- Bulgaria: Lukov March (February)
- Poland: Independence Day March (November 11), anti-LGBT counter-mobilisation
- Croatia/Austria: Bleiburg Commemorations, Ulrichsberg (army participation and state transport subsidies withdrawn from 2010)
Burschenschaften events

State responses

- Outright sponsorship, material support
- Tacit encouragement, allowance
- Muted, absent, ‘neutral’
- Restricting
- Banning

Non-state responses

- Monitoring, crime and public order offences reporting
- Civil (non-confrontational) counter-mobilisation, both institutional and direct action
- Militant counter-mobilisation: aggressive direct action

Important takeaways

- Demonstrations are a central tactic for far-right groups—‘march and grow’
- Eastern Europe represents a more inviting context: less state intervention, fewer opposition activists
- State has range of possible responses to far-right demonstrations—but counter-action rarely happens without societal pressure
- Non-state actors are essential to confronting far right
- Many pathways to demobilising far-right demonstration campaigns

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