

Proscribed Right-wing Extremist Organisations (PREO) Project

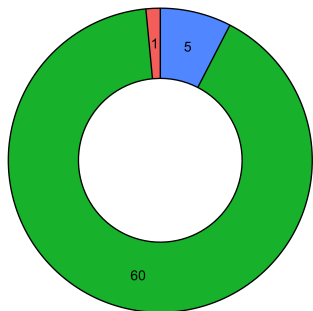
Michael C. Zeller
Michael Vaughan
Richard McNeil-Willson

Presentation to Senior Officials Meeting of the EU Internet Forum

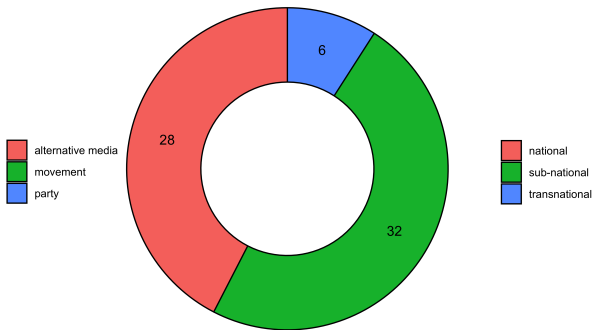
16 November 2021

PREO organisational types and operational extents

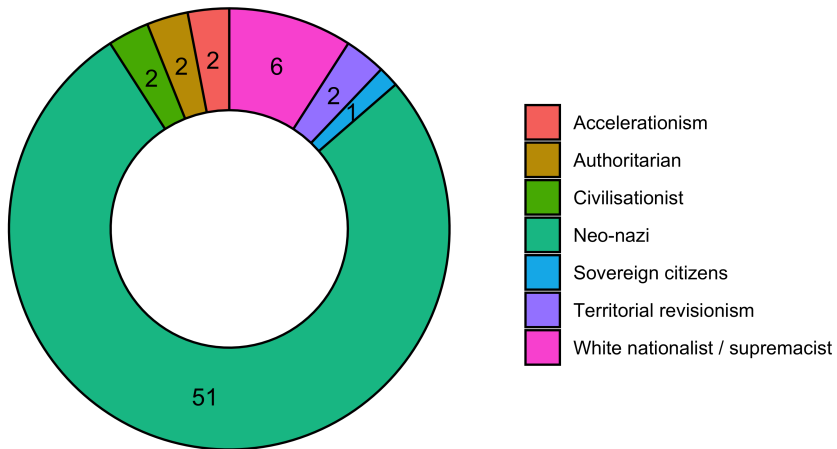
Type



Extent

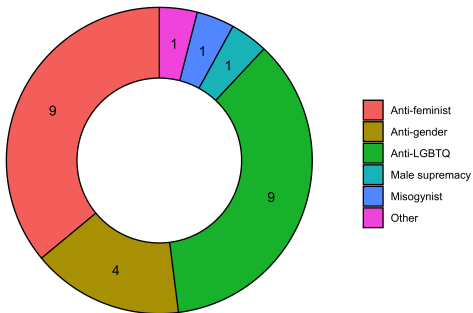


PREOs' ideational 'vision of society'

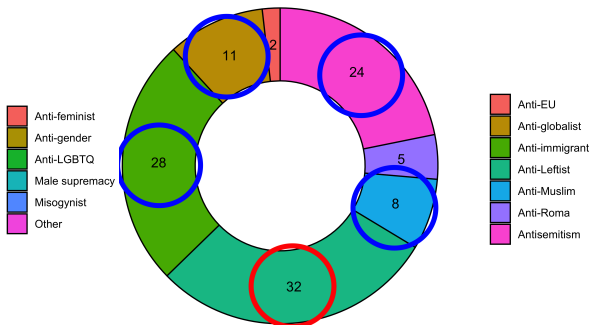


PREOs' ideational 'gender' and 'opponent' traits

Gender

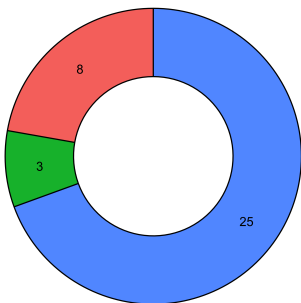


Opponent

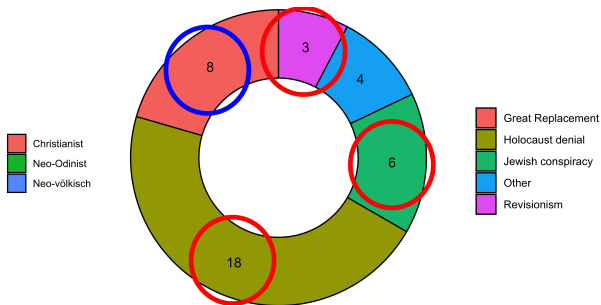


PREOs' ideational 'religious/cult' and 'conspiracy theory' traits

Religious/Cult



Conspiracy belief

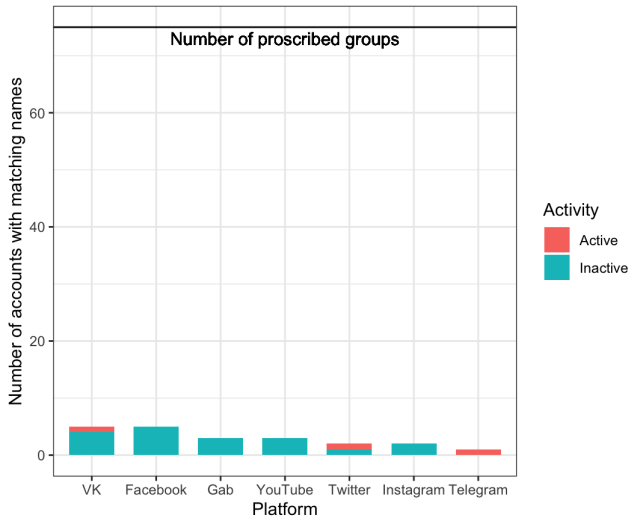


Ideational trait impressions

- overwhelmingly movement actors – but that category contains diversity
- neo-Nazi organisations predominate *because* many laws are framed to counter post-war Nazism
- distinction between **action-oriented** (leftists) and **ideologically-oriented** (Jews, Muslims, immigrants) opponents
- gendered traits and religious/cult traits (esp. neo-völkisch and Christianist) rooted in traditional, even atavistic views of family, sexuality, and society
- conspiracy beliefs: **longstanding** antisemitic variants and **recent** great replacement

PREO digital presence

PREOs on digital platforms



Digital activity impressions

- moderation of PREOs is largely effective, leading to very low representation on both mainstream and alt-tech platforms
- absence of organisational profiles does not, however, mean lack of a digital footprint
- lack of digital presence does not necessarily mean a lack of offline organisational activity


Content proscription

Modes of content proscription in the EU

Mode	Description
Context dependent judicial interpretation	Typically, no symbols are explicitly proscribed; charges may be brought for various forms of incitement, for which the use of symbols and content may be evidence
Fascist regime proscription	Symbols directly associated with the National Socialist or Fascist regimes are proscribed
Totalitarian proscription	Symbols directly associated with the totalitarian regimes (often specifying the National Socialist and Communist regimes) are proscribed
PREO symbol proscription	Symbols associated with proscribed organisations are specified and concurrently proscribed
Discrete symbol proscription	Proscription of symbols and content are applied, irrespective of their connection to existing, lawful organisations.
No content proscription	Symbols are not proscribed, even within the scope of context dependent judicial interpretation

Thematic groupings of banned symbols:

Supremacist symbols

<i>Imported American symbols</i>	<i>Anti-gay symbols</i>
<p>KKK symbols <input type="text"/></p> <div>  </div> <p>White fist</p> <div>  </div>	<p>Crossed-out rainbow flag <input type="text"/></p> <div> <input type="text"/> </div> <div>  </div> <p>'No paedophilia' symbol <input type="text"/></p> <div>  </div>

Connotative dimensions of VRWE (violent right-wing extremist) symbols

Table 6: Matrix of violent right-wing extremist symbols' connotative dimensions

	Strong VRWE linkage	Weak VRWE linkage
Highly cryptic	EX: '14 words' Nordadler symbols	EX: '100%' runic symbols
Slightly cryptic	EX: 'White Power' NS Reichsadler	EX: Celtic crosses meander patterns

PREO Project findings

- Further evidence of far-right transnationalism
- Variation in standards of proscription, including states with no proscriptive instruments
- Proscription and content moderation: not panaceas, but a means to disrupt extremism
- BUT! Extremist have many means to **beat the ban** (*‘Trotz Verbot – nicht tot’*)
- Hard to use historical cases to address current and emergent problems—ongoing monitoring is needed