

Born to Die Online? A Cross-National Analysis of the Rise and Decline of Alternative Actions Organizations in Europe

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Alternative collective initiatives often emerge during hard times, supporting citizens and helping them meet their increasing needs through nonmainstream economic activities. To this end, citizens organize formal and informal alternative action organizations (AAOs). Recent studies have shown that the economic crisis was a trigger for the founding of a wide variety of new AAOs, especially in the countries most affected, such as Greece and Spain. One aspect of AAOs untouched so far, however, is their life span. This article investigates factors that impact on AAOs' ability to stay active online, using fresh data on their organizational profiles from their organizational websites. It offers a comparative, systematic analysis of the age structure and the activity rate of AAOs in nine European countries (Greece, Germany, Italy, France, Spain, the United Kingdom, Poland, Switzerland, and Sweden), for the 2007-2016 period. Following the classic resource mobilization theory, we conclude that the lifeline of these organizations, as that of social movement organizations, even when their forms are innovative and alternative, depends on adequate resources.