

Subproject 7, Freie Universität Berlin, Universität Bern

The impact of challengers' online communication on media agenda-building — a comparison across countries and issues

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Approach & Research goal

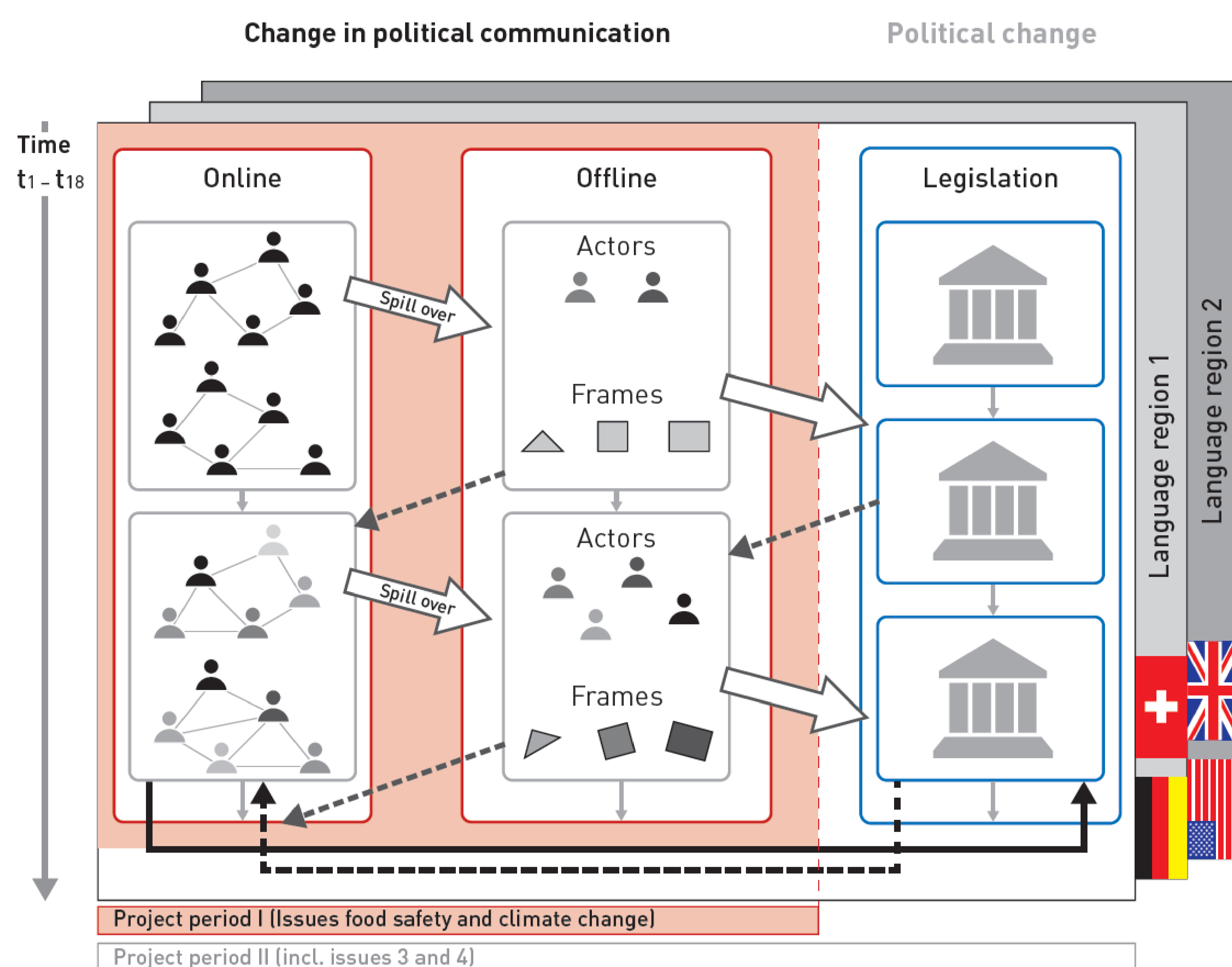
Central problems:

- Civil society actors („challengers“) have difficulties in accessing traditional media / politics; they are marginalized in media agenda building and issue framing.
- Does online communication have the potential to democratise access for challengers to traditional media / politics?

Goal: Answer the following research question:

Under which conditions does the online communication of „challengers“ have an impact on traditional media / the political agenda?

Research model



Comparison across countries / language regions:

- **Germany**, German-speaking **Switzerland**
- **UK**, **USA**

Comparison across issues:

- Established issue **climate change** and latent issue **food safety** (first project period)

Observation of possible spill-overs:

- Tracking of **online actor hyperlink networks** through a period of 18 months
- **Content analysis** of print media and **web-pages**: which **actors** and **frames** can be observed in the discourse?

Hypotheses

Hypotheses concerning networks:

- Strongly connected coalitions with a common master frame and prominent frame sponsors are more successful.

Hypotheses concerning media outlets:

- Political leaning of the newspaper affects the portrayal of media-challenger coalitions.

Hypotheses concerning country characteristics:

- Spill-overs are more likely to be found in pluralist countries than in corporatist countries.

Hypotheses concerning issue characteristics:

- We expect more framing spill-overs for established issues, for latent issues in turn more agenda-setting effects.

Methods

