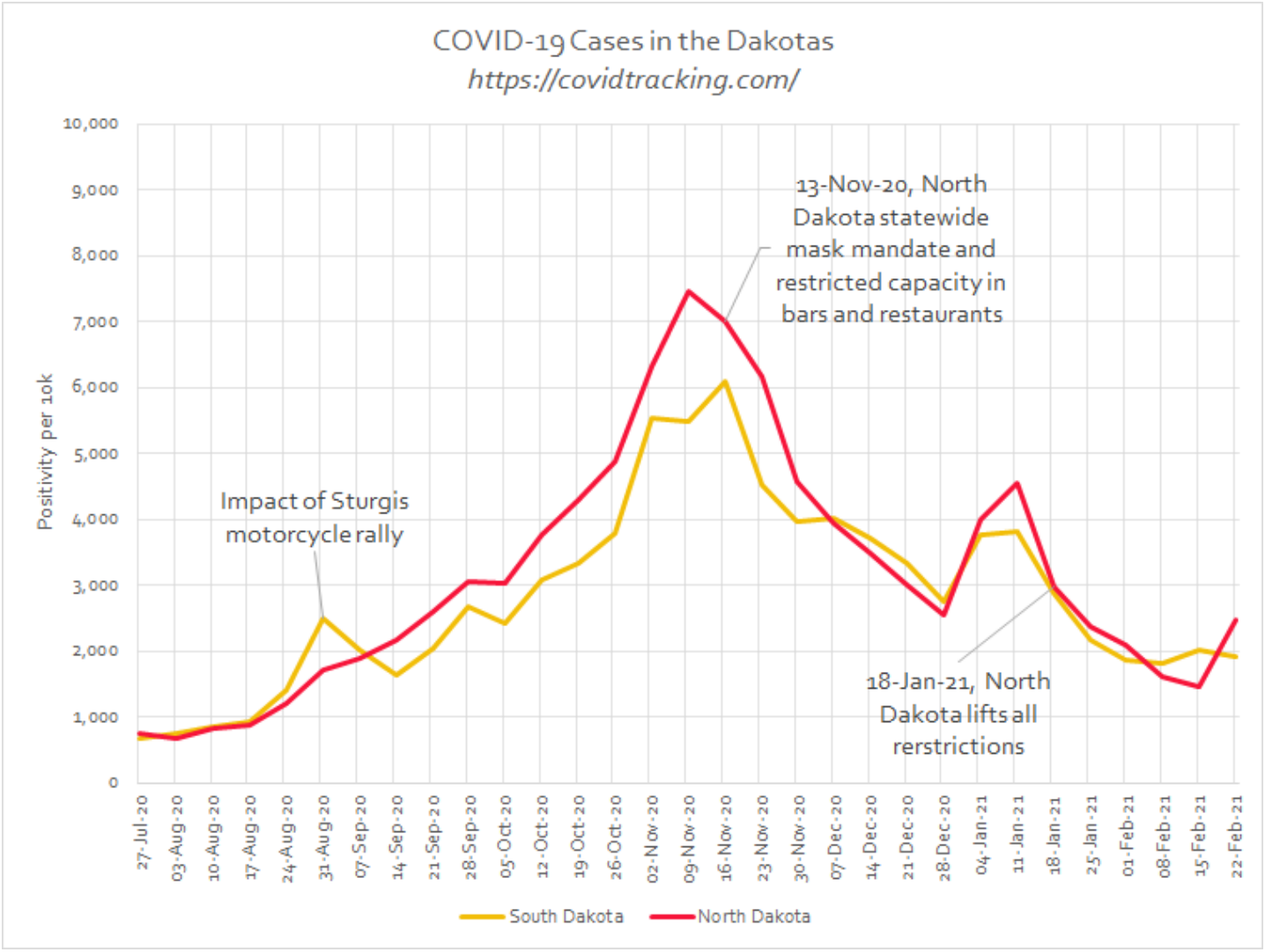
Twitter Thread by Joel Smalley

Joel Smalley
@RealJoelSmalley

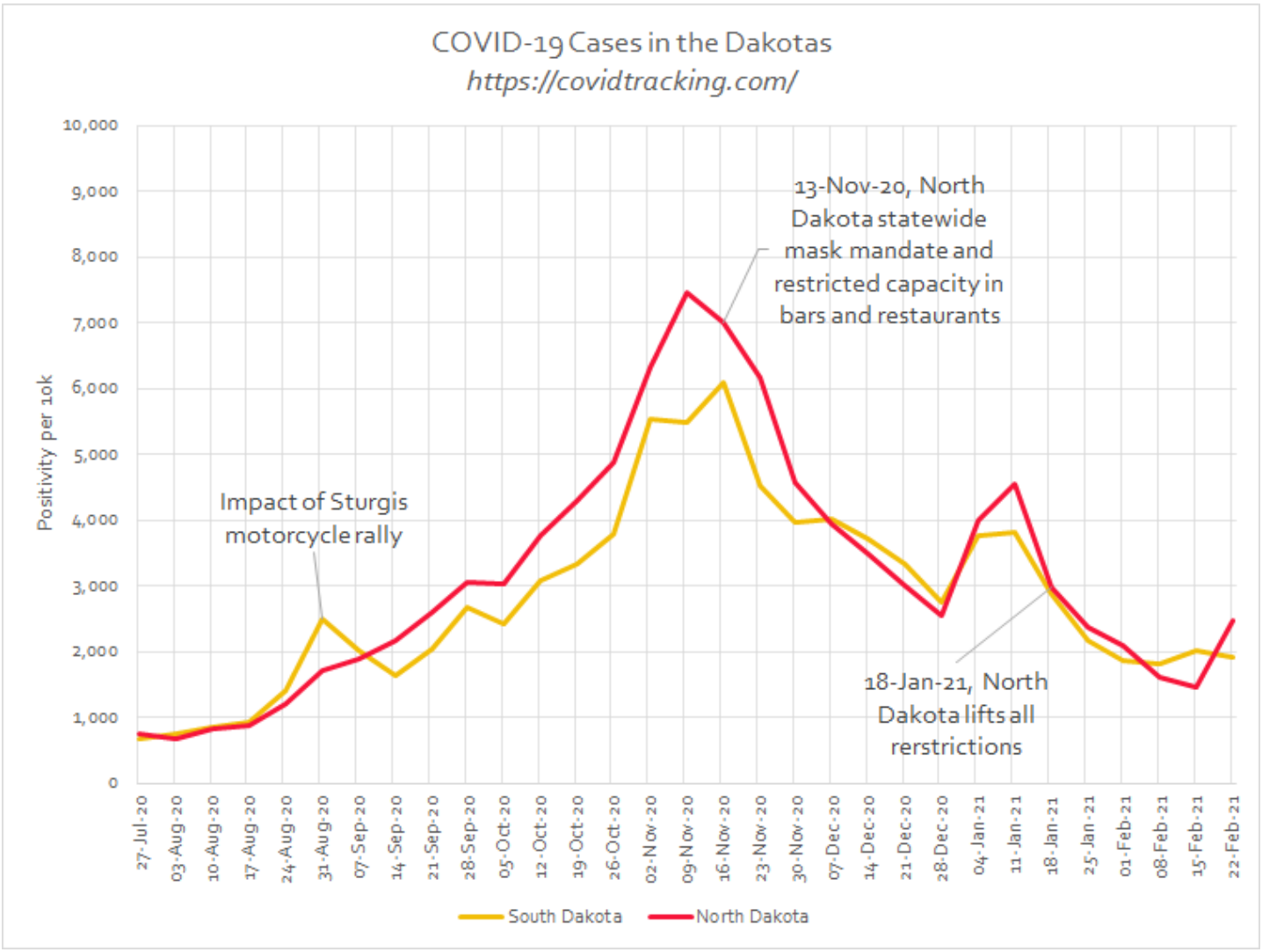
Grateful to a colleague who pointed out that North Dakota quietly lifted their restrictions on 18-Jan, I'm reposting my analysis of the Dakotas, two US states that are almost identical in geographic and demographic terms.



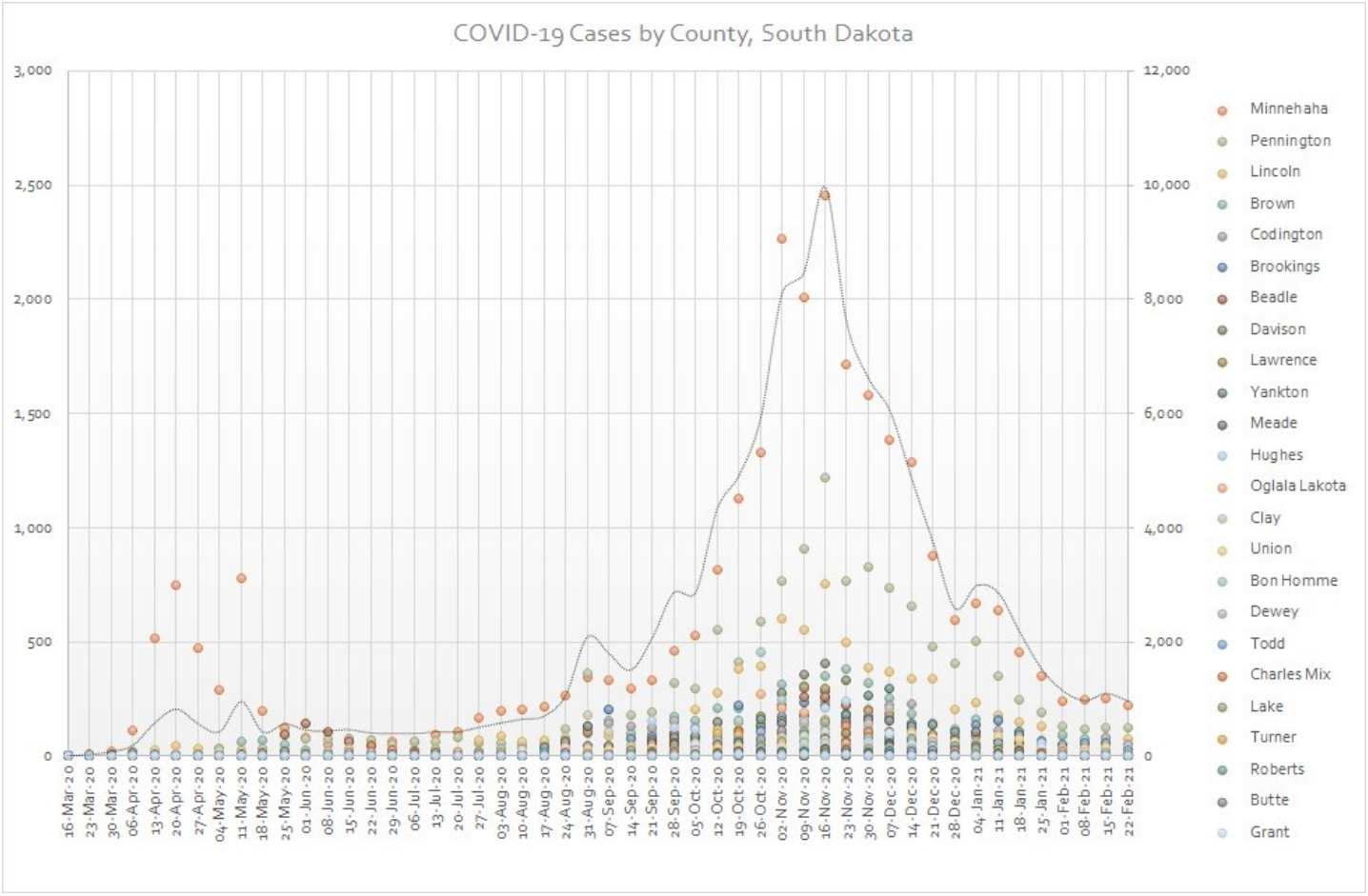
The Sturgis bike rally was blamed for starting the widespread transmission. Although it is clearly a superspreader event, it is not the cause for the start of transmission nor the continued spread. Masks and social distancing show no obvious benefit when introduced only in ND.



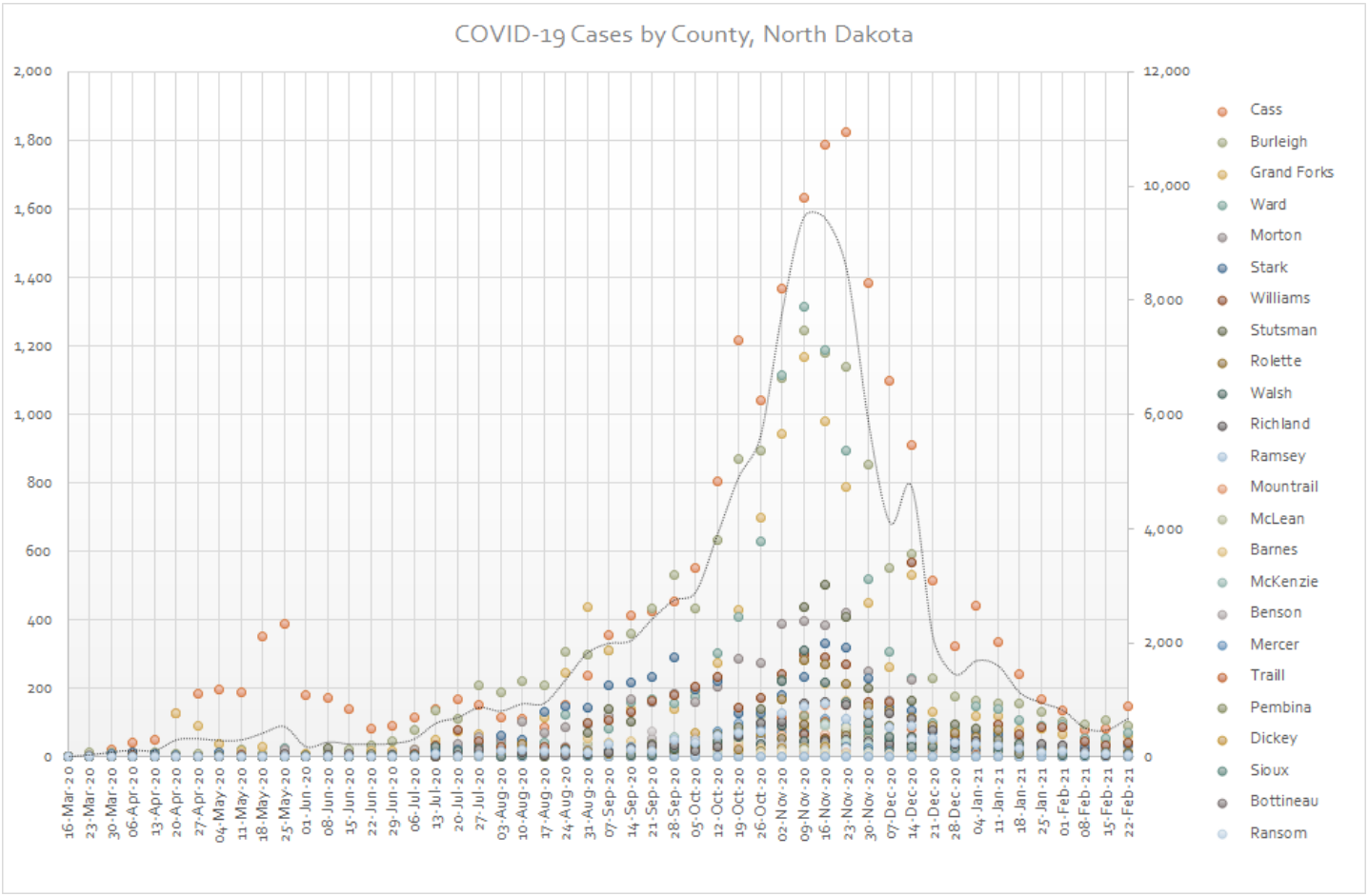
Curiously, transmission resurgence over the festive period (another superspreader event?) seems to be worse in ND than SD while the mandates remain in force. There is no apparent rebound whatsoever when interventions are lifted on 18-Jan.



NBC singled out SD county Brookings - "a string of bars that hosted maskless crowds. At one bar, a local rock band played for a packed house." - but the county does not stand out for COVID cases. Minnehaha, Pennington and Lincoln account for most of the cases.



NBC also reported that western North Dakota seemed more compliant than east and yet there are more western counties dominating case counts than eastern ones. That's MSM for you I guess. https://t.co/vahUrA8jQk



Further research into conditions in counties where transmission was high may give better insights into potential mitigation strategies for the future rather than relying on experimental ones with no prior scientific basis and no empirical validation.

I'm keeping an eye on what might be an increase in cases at the moment and will be looking for evidence of potential cause so soon after it seems the virus has passed through the Dakotas. Too early yet...