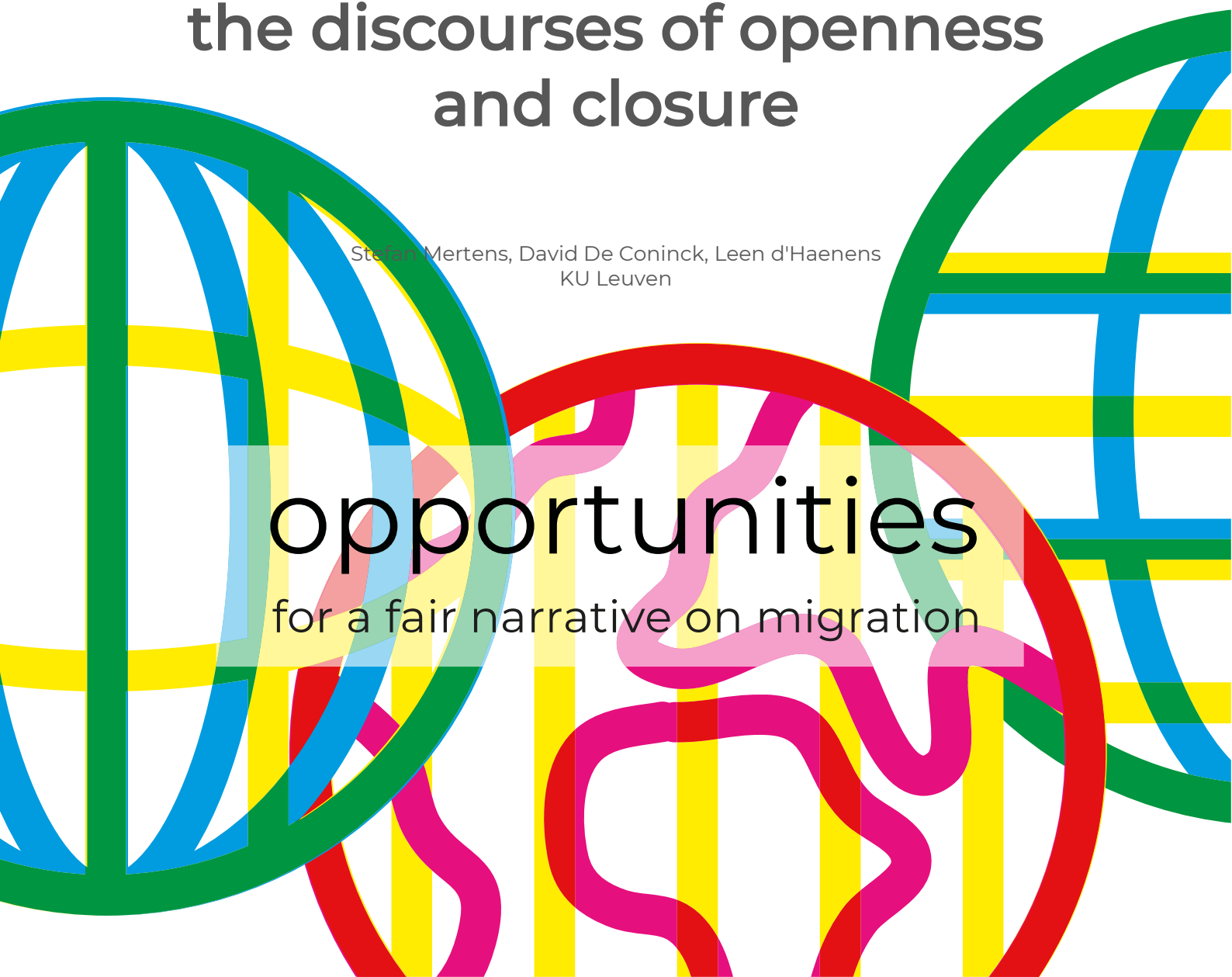


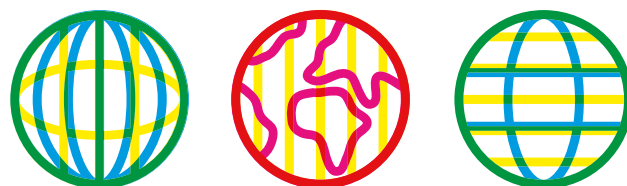
The Twitter Debate on Immigration in Austria, Germany, Hungary, and Italy: Politicians' articulations of the discourses of openness and closure

Stefan Mertens, David De Coninck, Leen d'Haenens
KU Leuven

opportunities

for a fair narrative on migration





opportunities

for a fair narrative on migration

Please cite this report as: Mertens, S., De Coninck, D., & d'Haenens, L. (2021). *The Twitter Debate on Immigration in Austria, Germany, Hungary, and Italy: Politicians' articulations of the discourses of openness and closure*. Deliverable 4.7. KU Leuven: OPPORTUNITIES project 101004945 – H2020.



Horizon 2020
European Union Funding
for Research & Innovation

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research & Innovation program under Grant Agreement no. 101004945. The information in this deliverable reflects only the authors' views and the European Union is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

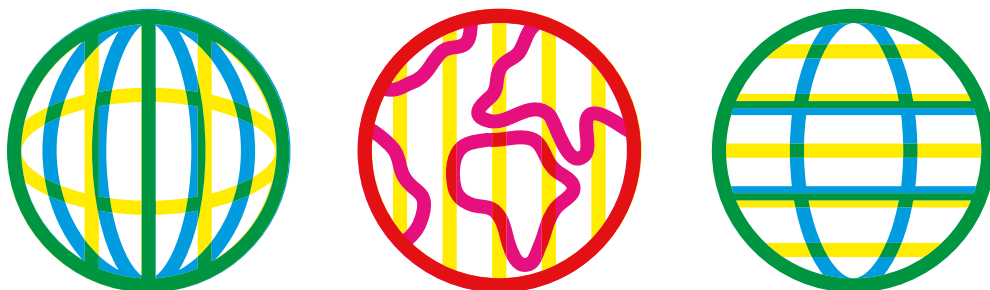
DISSEMINATION LEVEL: Public

Project: OPPORTUNITIES- Crises as Opportunities: towards a Level Telling Field on Migration and a New Narrative of Successful Integration

GA: 101004945

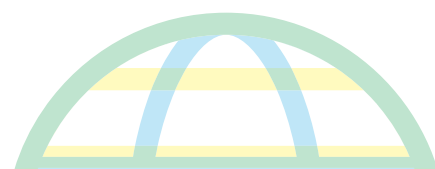
Call: H2020-SC6-MIGRATION-2020

Type of action: RIA



The Twitter Debate on Immigration in Austria, Germany, Hungary, and Italy: Politicians' articulations of the discourses of openness and closure

Work Package 4 – Deliverable 4.7





opportunities

for a fair narrative on migration

Due date: October 2021

Submission date: December 2021

Lead Beneficiary: KU Leuven

Authors: Stefan Mertens, David De Coninck, Leen d'Haenens

Table of contents

Abstract..... 6

1. Introduction: politicians in the age of polarisation..... 8

2. Focus on Austria, Germany, Italy, and Hungary.....9

3. Method: a lexical analysis with the “Sketch Engine” tool.....11

4. Hypothesis and research question.....13

5. Results.....14

6. Conclusion and discussion..... 30

7. Suggestions for further research.....32

References.....34






opportunities

for a fair narrative on migration

Abstract

The debate between the political left and the political right has increasingly become a debate on the benefits and drawbacks of immigration. In this report we analyze the lexical choices to be found in the Twitter discourse of politicians from four adjacent countries: Austria, Germany, Hungary, and Italy. Seven Twitter accounts were scrutinised to compare the views of traditional parties (socialist, liberal, and conservative) with those of the “new” far-right, anti-immigration parties. We considered a large sample period going from January 1st, 2015 to May 1st, 2021 (7,294,569 words). A corpus-based linguistic analysis showed that the concept of “borders” is central to the discourse of the right and far right, while left-wing/centrist politicians favour “integration”. Nevertheless, both far-right and traditional parties use discursive “safety valves” to stave off attacks from the other side. Right-wing/far-right politicians strive to avoid accusations of racism, while left-wing/centrist politicians fear being represented as blindly believing in the benefits of immigration. Regardless of political affiliation, opposition politicians in need of attention also tend to take an antagonistic stance in their communication.

An abstract graphic design featuring a white background with several overlapping, colorful geometric and organic shapes. On the left and right sides, there are two stylized globes or spheres. Each globe is composed of a grid of lines: a vertical green line, a horizontal yellow line, and a diagonal blue line. In the center, there is a red circle. Overlapping the red circle and the globes are several wavy, organic lines in pink and magenta. The text 'opportunities' is centered in the middle of the composition, with 'for a fair narrative on migration' below it.

opportunities

for a fair narrative on migration



opportunities

for a fair narrative on migration

1. Introduction: politicians on Twitter in the age of polarisation

The difference between democracy and authoritarianism is that in a democracy, politicians are supposed to act according to the wishes of their electorate, while autocratic politicians are under no such constraint. This also implies that in a democracy, politicians are in a permanent struggle to keep their voters happy. Communication is of course key in achieving this, and it should be no surprise that politicians eagerly embrace all communication means that reach a wide audience—including Twitter, whose short message format is ideally suited for sound bites (originally only 140 characters were allowed per tweet, a maximum allowed length that was doubled in November 2017). Such communication geared towards voters with a short attention span may be the most effective way to make an impression—with the most famous example of weaponised short messages being of course Donald Trump's tweets (Varea et al., 2020). This report looks specifically at European data on tweets related to immigration.

Historically, politicians on the left and right side of the political spectrum have widely differed in their opinions about income inequality and the role of the government in economic life. This dimension of politics has not entirely disappeared, but political differences seem to be increasingly organised around another new dimension. The political difference that seems to dominate current debates is the difference between openness and closure. On the one hand, some politicians stress the importance of the free flows of migration, echoing left-liberal concerns. Another current is more nationalist, and argues for a strong protection of borders, and an effort to keep Western societies as culturally homogenous as possible. Britain's influential weekly "The Economist" (2016) sums up this divide in three questions: "Welcome immigrants or keep them out? Open up to foreign trade or protect domestic industries? Embrace cultural change, or resist it?"

In US monthly "The Atlantic", Rachel Donadio argued in 2019 that two European politicians exemplified the two competing visions in this new cultural dimension. French President Emmanuel Macron and Matteo Salvini, Italy's former deputy prime minister and interior minister, are arguably from the same generation, but more than the Alps divides them. Martina Zaghi (2018) used these two politicians' tweets to illustrate the tension between openness and closure. Donadio (2019) notes that Macron and Salvini are only two major examples of a rift that divides many Western countries. Macron's official stance towards immigrants is: "You are here because of the cruelties of history, through the will of your grandparents, your parents or your own will, and you are an opportunity for our country" (York, 2021), while Salvini's is resolutely anti-immigration. Semiotic scholars (Filmer, 2021) have studied the influence of Salvini on foreign media representations of stereotyped Italians rejecting refugees. A 2018 report on Italian news reporting on immigration by Italy's Carta di Roma association dubs such reporting "border shutdown news" ("notizie di chiusura"). Salvini is the key "frame sponsor" of this xenophobic discourse, with the abovementioned report arguing that words build walls as effectively as bricks.

2. Focus on Austria, Germany, Hungary and Italy

If openness and closure are two key discourses in the Western debate on immigration, one might expect to find them in the following four European neighbouring countries: Austria, Germany, Italy and Hungary. If so, a further question might be: how are these discourses shaped there? This report looks at the content of such discourses in the above four countries through a corpus-based analysis of the words that collocate with the word “migration” in tweets by leading politicians.

Seven political Twitter accounts were studied. We expected that “openness” would be a feature of the discourse of centrist political parties, and “closure” a feature of right-wing/far-right political discourse. For Germany we selected the Twitter accounts of the main governing party, the CDU (Christlich Demokratische Union), as well as that of far-right opposition party Alternative für Deutschland. In Austria the far-right party Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs has been part of some governments, but its Twitter account as well as that of its leading politician Manfred Haimbuchner contained too few references to migration to enable a corpus analysis. Hence, we chose a true opposition party with an active Twitter account: NEOS – Das Neue Österreich und Liberales Forum, and compared this account with that of Sebastian Kurz, from the conservative Österreichische Volkspartei, who was chancellor from 2017 to 2019 and again in 2020 and 2021. For Italy we selected the accounts of Matteo Salvini, whom earlier studies present as the prototypical proponent of closed borders (Zaghi, 2018; Donadio, 2019). As its counterpart we added the Twitter account of the center-left party Partito Democratico, which is part of the current Italian government. Finally, we looked at the English-language Twitter account of Hungary’s “Fidesz”, the country’s governing party, notorious for its hard-right stance on immigration. This makes for a sample with some regional (the four regions under study) and political (left-wing and right-wing voices) variety.

Our sampling strategy is akin to that of Fabio Carrella who in 2018 selected the Twitter accounts of four populist European politicians: Italy’s Luigi Di Maio and Matteo Salvini, France’s Marine Le Pen, and the UK’s Nigel Farage. These accounts were his “study corpora”. In addition he studied three “reference corpora”—the Twitter accounts of non-populist politicians Matteo Renzi (Italy), François Hollande (France) and David Cameron (UK). While our focus is on the closure/ openness dichotomy, we could have used the same accounts to look at populist/non-populist politicians.

Since we wanted to do a corpus-based linguistic analysis, we needed a lot of tweets. So we used a sample going from January 1st, 2015 to May 1st, 2021. Table 1 shows the official names of the Twitter accounts, the size of the corpus and the number of times the word “migration” is mentioned. We used the term “Migration” (spelled with a capital letter as all German nouns) for Germany and Austria, but we didn’t use its direct translation (“migrazione”) for Italy since Italians tend to mostly refer to “immigrazione”. In other words we went for the most-used terms in each language. Regarding the English-language Fidesz corpus (Hungary), we used “#migration” rather than “migration” without a hashtag owing to the latter’s number of occurrences being too low to allow for a corpus linguistic analysis.





opportunities
for a fair narrative on migration

Table 1: Corpus overview

Account name	Country	Ideology	Corpus size (in words)	Search term	Occur- rences
@AfD	Germany	Nationalism	138,278	Migration	18
@CDU	Germany	Conservatism	1,300,356	Migration	191
@sebastiankurz	Austria	Conservatism	248,152	Migration	67
@neos_eu	Austria	Liberalism	1,233,534	Migration	80
@LegaSalvini	Italy	Nationalism	2,328,293	immigrazione	491
@pdnetwork	Italy	Socialism	1,992,998	immigrazione	214
@FideszEP	Hungary	Nationalism	53,012	#migration	22

While all seven subcorpora are large enough for a corpus-based linguistic analysis, there are big differences in corpus (account) sizes. As pointed out by Rauchfleisch and Metag (2020), Twitter adoption by politicians is quite disparate, with two rather obvious “user types”: active users and passive users. It should be noted that comparing Twitter accounts is different from comparing other sources such as traditional media. Most if not all politicians have at least some media representation. On the other hand, their having a Twitter account is a matter of choice: that of being present in an active or passive manner on this networking service. The same goes for political parties. As we needed large samples to reconstruct language use patterns we chose the largest Twitter accounts available in each country, regardless of whether they were those of a specific politician or a political party.

3. Method: a lexical analysis with the “Sketch Engine” tool

Searching for the meaning of a word can be done through dictionary research, but of course, and as noted by Lin (1998: 768), a word's meaning can (and must) also be derived from context. Analyzing larger bodies of texts yield many words with many collocations. ‘Manually’ analyzing such large quantities of text is very labor-intensive. We therefore chose to use the Sketch Engine text analysis software, a handy tool to determine which words collocate with other words more often than they would if their joint occurrences were purely a matter of chance.

A ‘collocation’ (<https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/collocation>) can be defined as the habitual juxtaposition of a given word with one or more words with a frequency greater than may be ascribed to chance. To provide an overview of all such collocative patterns, Sketch Engine generates ‘word sketches’ (see Kilgariff & Tugwell, 2002)—overviews of words that appear more often together in the same sentence. In this report we also use the ‘thesaurus score’. This score (ranging from 0 to 1) is based on an assessment of the degree to which words share the same collocates. We drew up lists of words that had a high thesaurus score when compared with other words: “As similar words appear in a similar context, their word sketches will be similar, so the similarity of two words can be obtained by calculating the intersection of the word sketches of the two words” (Herman et al., 2019: 87).

11

Kilgariff et al. (2014: 14) provide the following example of what a thesaurus score is all about: “The Sketch Engine prepares a ‘distributional thesaurus’ for a corpus. This is a thesaurus created on the basis of common collocation. If two words have many collocates in common, they will appear in each other's thesaurus entry. It works as follows: if we find instances of both *drink tea* and *drink coffee*, that is one small piece of evidence that *tea* and *coffee* are similar. We can say that they ‘share’ the collocate *drink* (verb), in the OBJECT-OF relation. In a very large computation, for all pairs of words, we compute how many collocates they share, and the ones that share most (after normalization) are the ones that appear in a word's thesaurus entry.”

Investigating the meaning of a word through its collocations may make it possible to study different ways of contextualising specific themes within different corpora. For instance, when comparing a left-wing political party's discourse about welfare with that of a right-wing party, other words are highly likely to belong to similar semantic clouds (as indicated by the thesaurus score) in both corpora. A case in point: welfare will be praised for providing a livelihood in one corpus and blamed for discouraging people from working in the other. For instance, “parasite metaphors” (Musolff, 2014) could be hypothesised to appear more often in the right-wing thesaurus word clouds. Our intention in this study was to find out whether different semantic clouds were associated with the use of the word ‘migration’ in the corpora under study.

This method has elements in common with Entman's analysis of ‘frames’ (1993). Entman (1993: 52) suggested that frames “select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described”. While words occupying





opportunities

for a fair narrative on migration

similar places in corpora do not necessarily fit all the criteria or cannot be singled out as being part of a problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation or treatment recommendation, words with collocates in common are likely to contribute to such processes. We followed the example of Alcántara-Plá and Ruiz-Sánchez (2017: 264, see Abdeslam, 2019 for another example) in their assessment of how different word collocations contribute to the construction of meaning: “The most frequent collocations point at the frames being constructed in the discourse. To take an example, we will see that the adjective ‘Islamic’ is frequently used with violent concepts such as ‘terrorism’. This indicates a conceptual contiguity between terrorism and Islam, i.e. that terrorism is part of the framing conveyed by the word ‘Islam’.”

The approach we used—deriving frames from the automatic coding of large corpora—is also called ‘frame mapping’: we derive frames from data collected through electronic means. Such an approach has its advantages, but it also faces criticism: “On the one hand, this approach is highly reliable as frames are not ‘found’ by the researcher, but ‘computed’ by the computer program. On the other hand, it reduces frames to the clusters of words and focuses on manifest characteristics of texts only—leading to concerns about the validity of the approach” (Schäfer & O’Neill, 2017: 11; Matthes & Kohring, 2008: 260-261).

Using this computer-assisted approach we generated a list of the 20 most frequent collocations with the word ‘migration’ (or equivalent) in the corpora under study, while adding an extra layer of qualitative assessment. Our results section shows how words from the collocation lists can be grouped under overarching themes. The categories to which we assign the words are not the result of calculations (such as the thesaurus score), but part of an interpretation that we present as such in the results section. The Sketch Engine program could also group collocating words into clusters based on their objective proximity, but we chose a reasoned classification, which provides more meaningful results as their appearance among the 20 selected words already is an indicator of objective proximity.

An opportunity for deeper qualitative analysis provided by Sketch Engine is to look at “concordances”. This feature makes it possible to look at the surrounding text of each word in every single instance. This feature not only highlighted the collocations of “migration”, but also those of each word that was collocated with “migration”. Applying such a concordance analysis to all collocations of collocations is not possible in corpora as large as ours, however. We did browse the corpus in this way to look at the instances in which a word was used and to provide some examples of actual tweets. For instance we encountered the German word “Erhöhung”, which means “increase”—a word that can apply to just about anything. As a result, limiting ourselves to the thesaurus score data would only tell us that the political party under study associates “migration” with an indefinite “increase”. However, looking at the concordances let us see that this corpus pertains to a specific increase, namely a tax increase. It thus made sense to make additional use of the “concordance” feature whether or not we intended to do a systematic qualitative analysis of all concordances.

4. Hypothesis and research question

Based on our research's method and specific theme, we were able to formulate a specific research question, as well as a specific hypothesis as to what our results would be. As we favoured a lexical analysis, "lexicity" was the key ingredient of both our question and hypothesis.

Research question: Which lexical choices are apparent in the collocations of "migration" in the seven Twitter corpora under study, articulating both the discourse of openness and the discourse of closure?

Hypothesis: The discourse of openness (articulated by traditional parties, whether they are conservative, socialist, or liberal) can be marked with a certain set of lexical choices, while the discourse of closure used by new far-right/nationalist/populist politicians can be marked with another set of lexical choice





opportunities
for a fair narrative on migration

5. Results

Figure 1: Collocations of “migration” on the Twitter account of Alternative für Deutschland (bubble chart)

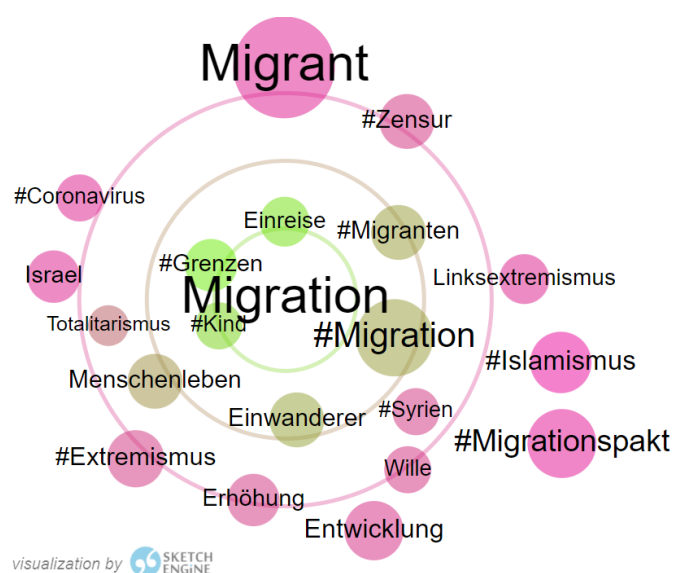


Figure 2: Collocations of “migration” on the Twitter account of Alternative für Deutschland (numbers output in Sketch Engine)

Word	Frequency ?	Similarity ? ↓	Word	Frequency ?	Similarity ? ↓
1 #Grenzen	8	0.126 ...	11 #Extremismus	10	0.082 ...
2 Einreise	7	0.123 ...	12 Wille	6	0.081 ...
3 #Kind	6	0.120 ...	13 #Zensur	9	0.081 ...
4 Einwanderer	9	0.108 ...	14 Entwicklung	11	0.080 ...
5 #Migranten	9	0.107 ...	15 #Coronavirus	6	0.077 ...
6 #Migration	21	0.107 ...	16 Israel	8	0.077 ...
7 Menschenleben	9	0.104 ...	17 Linksextremismus	7	0.077 ...
8 Totalitarismus	4	0.092 ...	18 Migrant	40	0.076 ...
9 Erhöhung	8	0.082 ...	19 #Migrationspakt	16	0.074 ...
10 #Syrien	6	0.082 ...	20 #Islamismus	12	0.072 ...

Clusters of words in the discourse of Alternative für Deutschland

⇒ **Synonyms of Migration**

When looking at the collocations of the word “Migration” in the AfD word cloud, we can start by stating the obvious. Some words that score highly are words that have more or less the same meaning and hence can be considered **synonyms**, like “Einreise” (travel), “#Migration” and “#Migrant”, “Migranten” and “Einwanderer” (a German synonym for migrant).

⇒ **Borders**

Also, the word “Grenzen” (“borders”) is a word that may seem neutral at first sight. Nevertheless, the choice of this word and its high collocation with “Migration” does suggest how important it is for the AfD to maintain/guard national borders and control migration. One tweet suggests that an open-border policy is a very large problem for the safety in German streets. According to the AfD, now is the time to close down borders, not open them. The focus on “borders” also resonates with the “#Migrationspakt” issue: the AfD did not want Germany to join the 2018 United Nations Global Compact for Migration, fearing it might result in opening national borders. Indeed, the party insisted that “Man KANN Grenzen schließen”: “It is possible to close borders”. Intended to make migration “safe, orderly and regular” worldwide, the pact was ratified at the end of 2018. According to observers on the right of the political spectrum, it was far too lenient.

⇒ **Denial of the will of the people**

A connection is made with the “will” (“Wille”) of the German people. An AfD tweet read: “The Migration Pact is introduced against the will and behind the backs of the European and German people.” In fact, the political “will” to accept well-regulated, very limited migration flows is not present because politicians do not follow the will of “the majority of the people” and would rather collude with the “cosmopolitan” mass media and imposes censorship (“Zensur”).

⇒ **The threat of totalitarianism**

As censorship is a risk we need to avoid, a further threat are the ideologies which underpin such censorship: “Totalitarismus” (totalitarianism), “Extremismus” (extremism), “Linksextremismus” (left-wing extremism) and “#Islamismus” (Islamism).

⇒ **Creating empathy**

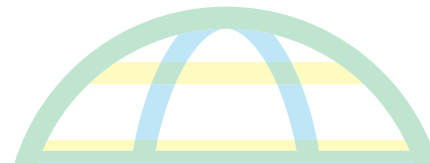
Another twist in the collocations is a focus on “children” (#Kind) and on human lives (“Menschenleben”). Mentioning “human life” and especially “children” highlights the high cost of inept policies while provoking empathy.

⇒ **National contexts**

Some national contexts that are relevant to migration are stressed as well, notably those of Syria and Israel.

⇒ **Other contexts**

Finally, the coverage of “migration” also includes a few words that are related to other fields of interest. Some blurring between pieces covering the Covid-19 pandemic and migration issues is inevitable. The word “Erhöhung” (raise) refers to tweets about tax raises which the AfD opposes. Finally, the word “Entwicklung” (development) is not really related to a specific phenomenon. It is a general word which applies to all kinds of change.





opportunities
for a fair narrative on migration

Figure 3: Collocations of “migration” on the Twitter account of the CDU (bubble chart)

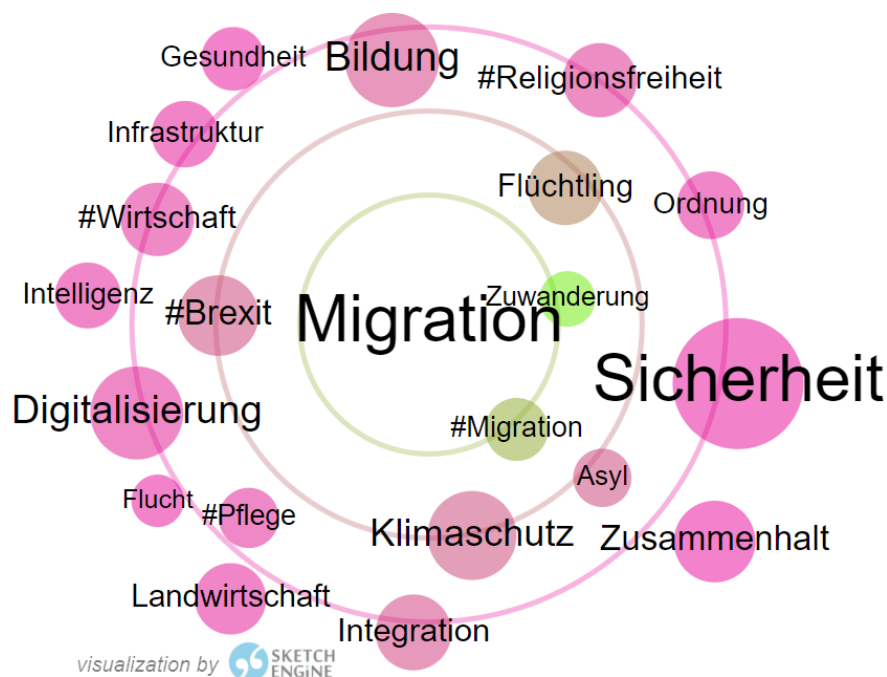


Figure 4: Collocations of “migration” on the Twitter account of the CDU (numbers output in Sketch Engine”

Word	Frequency ?	Similarity ? ↓	Word	Frequency ?	Similarity ? ↓
1 Zuwanderung	58	0.238 ...	11 Digitalisierung	391	0.107 ...
2 #Migration	100	0.198 ...	12 #Pflege	83	0.106 ...
3 Flüchtling	188	0.168 ...	13 Landwirtschaft	162	0.104 ...
4 Klimaschutz	341	0.133 ...	14 Intelligenz	120	0.104 ...
5 Asyl	72	0.131 ...	15 Ordnung	133	0.104 ...
6 #Brexit	247	0.131 ...	16 Infrastruktur	124	0.101 ...
7 Integration	201	0.127 ...	17 Sicherheit	1,034	0.100 ...
8 Bildung	407	0.125 ...	18 Flucht	43	0.100 ...
9 #Religionsfreiheit	187	0.113 ...	19 Gesundheit	104	0.100 ...
10 #Wirtschaft	179	0.109 ...	20 Zusammenhalt	258	0.098 ...

Clusters of words in the CDU's discourse

⇒ Synonyms of Migration

As in the AfD corpus, we see a lot of words that belong in the same semantic field as "Migration"—that is: "#Migration", "Asyl" (Asylum), "Zuwanderung" (A German synonym for migration), "Flüchtling" (refugee) and "Flucht" ("Flight").

⇒ Other current societal challenges

Other current challenges are mentioned alongside "Migration". The AfD corpus mentions the Covid-19 pandemic, while the CDU corpus goes further, in adding extra contexts/challenges such as "Gesundheit" (health), "#Pflege" (referring to health workers), "Digitalisierung" (digitization), "#Brexit", "Klimaschutz" (climate protection), and "Infrastruktur". The one religious word found in the CDU corpus up is "Religionsfreiheit" (freedom of religion), which signals a very different viewpoint from that of the AfD tweets and their fixation on "Islamismus". Economic themes are also part of the broader context of "migration" and its connectedness with other themes, as shown by words such as "Wirtschaft" (business) or "Landwirtschaft" (agriculture). The word "Intelligenz" crops up quite a bit nearly always as part of "Künstliche Intelligenz" (artificial intelligence).

⇒ A plea towards integration

One CDU tweet states that "everyone who lives [in Germany] can fulfill their potential through **education, training, and integration** in the labor market." This rhetoric of inclusion is very different from the AfD's exclusionary language. According to the AfD there is a clear division in society between "the elites" and "the people", with the former "protecting" migrants and conniving with the mass media to deny the will of the latter. This belligerent vision is contradicted by the CDU tweets, which emphasize consensus. Indeed, the choice for the word "Zusammenhalt" (cohesion) exemplifies this.

⇒ Law and order

One of the AfD tweets states (in German): "Policies of open borders and #de-escalation advocated by leftists are leading to ever-increasing pressure on Germany's streets, which our #police have to deal with. It is precisely against this police that leftists are now constantly waging smear campaigns." But the CDU is certainly not a left-wing party. Two words that come up very often in the party's tweets are "Sicherheit" (security) and "Ordnung" (order), as in: "Furthermore, it is in Germany's interest to manage #migration in an **orderly** manner with our European neighbors", or "The CDU is and remains the party of internal **security**."





opportunities
for a fair narrative on migration

Figure 5: Collocations of “migration” on Sebastian Kurz’s Twitter account (bubble chart)

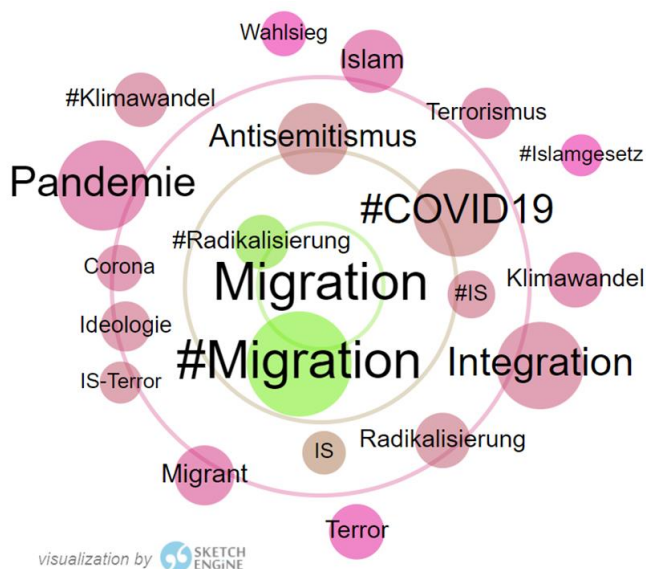


Figure 6: Collocations of “migration” on Sebastian Kurz’s Twitter account (numbers output in Sketch Engine)

Word	Frequency ?	Similarity ? ↓	Word	Frequency ?	Similarity ? ↓
1 #Migration	107	0.257 ...	11 Integration	66	0.164 ...
2 #Radikalisierung	16	0.247 ...	12 Corona	9	0.161 ...
3 IS	7	0.191 ...	13 Terrorismus	13	0.158 ...
4 Antisemitismus	38	0.176 ...	14 Klimawandel	17	0.156 ...
5 #COVID19	67	0.175 ...	15 Pandemie	72	0.154 ...
6 Radikalisierung	17	0.171 ...	16 Migrant	22	0.150 ...
7 IS-Terror	6	0.170 ...	17 Islam	26	0.149 ...
8 #IS	10	0.168 ...	18 Terror	17	0.133 ...
9 Ideologie	12	0.167 ...	19 #Islamgesetz	6	0.128 ...
10 #Klimawandel	16	0.166 ...	20 Wahlsieg	8	0.128 ...

Clusters of words in Sebastian Kurz's discourse

⇒ **Synonyms**

As could be expected, a number of words in Sebastian Kurz's discourse belong within the "Migration" semantic sphere— "#Migration", "Migrant", etc.

⇒ **A clear focus on Islam and radicalization**

Many of Kurz's tweets focus on Islam and the threat of terrorism. For instance: "Together in Europe, we must resolutely combat the threat of Islamist terrorism and the ideology behind it, political Islam." Words used include "IS-Terror", "IS", "Terrorismus" (terrorism), and "#Radikalisierung" (radicalisation). When Kurz tweets about "Ideologie", what he has in mind is mostly the ideology of radical Islam. A specific Austrian element in his tweets pertains to a law that defines the rights and obligations of the Muslim religious community. For instance: "We must not place Muslims under general suspicion, but we must take decisive action against associations that are not in line with our values. The #IslamGesetz (#Islam law) must also be implemented consistently by the Federal Chancellery."

⇒ **Integration is also important**

The "IslamGesetz" is a two-pronged law that enshrines the right of Muslim Austrians to openly practice their faith while seeking to limit factors thought to lead to radicalization. This is reflected in Kurz's tweets about integration: "Austria has one of the world's largest Afghan communities after Iran, Pakistan & Sweden. There are still major problems with integration, and we are therefore against additional admission." Kurz's welcoming attitude is tempered by worry about additional migration, here from Afghanistan. This ambivalence is also found in another tweet: "Success of integration also depends on the number of people to be integrated—we must reduce inflows and do all we can to integrate migrants who are already here".

⇒ **Fighting anti-Semitism**

Another word that frequently occurs in Sebastian Kurz's tweets is "Antisemitismus". In another context, Kurz (AJC Global Voice, 2018) stressed Austria's responsibility to stand up and fight against anti-Semitism. It is a historical matter in Austria and Kurz has repeatedly said the fight against anti-Semitism is in the country's national interest. For instance, one can read in one tweet of his: "Anti-Semitism is not an opinion—it is a crime. Incidents are accumulating in Austria. Must actively counteract!"

⇒ **Other semantic spheres**

Other words that co-occur with "migration" in Sebastian Kurz's tweet corpus refer to other major issues such as "Klimawandel" (climate change) and the Covid-19 pandemic ("Pandemie", "#Covid19" and "Corona"). And of course, he could not fail to tweet about his 2019 election win ("Wahlsieg").



Figure 7: Collocations of “migration” on The Twitter account of NEOS (bubble chart)

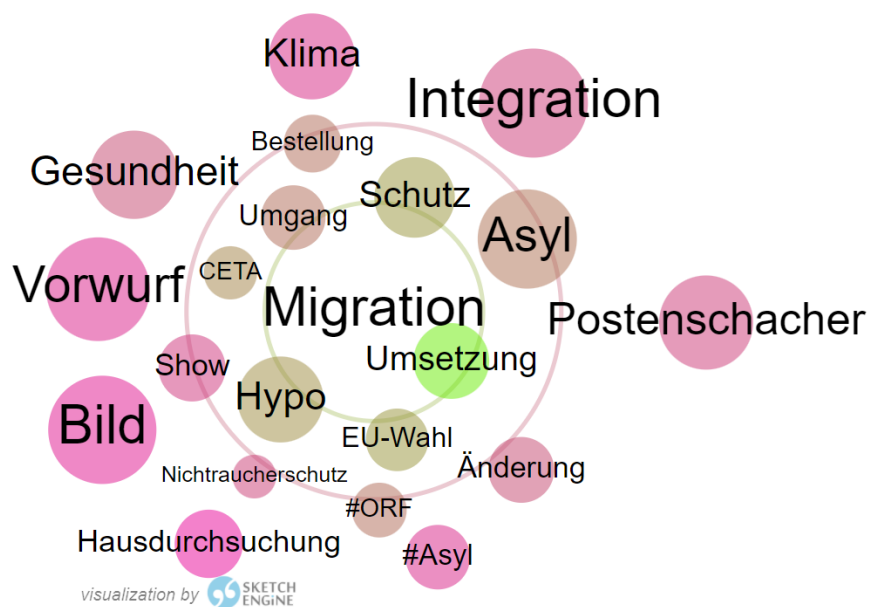


Figure 8: Collocations of “migration” on the Twitter account of NEOS (numbers output in Sketch Engine)

Word	Frequency ?	Similarity ? ↓	Word	Frequency ?	Similarity ? ↓
1 Umsetzung	67	0.194 ...	11 Änderung	50	0.158 ...
2 EU-Wahl	45	0.175 ...	12 Nichtraucherschutz	21	0.156 ...
3 Schutz	76	0.175 ...	13 Postenschacher	105	0.155 ...
4 Hypo	87	0.173 ...	14 Integration	142	0.155 ...
5 CETA	32	0.171 ...	15 Show	52	0.154 ...
6 Asyl	117	0.167 ...	16 Klima	87	0.151 ...
7 Bestellung	38	0.166 ...	17 #Asyl	48	0.150 ...
8 #ORF	34	0.166 ...	18 Vorwurf	128	0.149 ...
9 Umgang	48	0.166 ...	19 Bild	140	0.147 ...
10 Gesundheit	92	0.158 ...	20 Hausdurchsuchung	54	0.144 ...

Clusters of words in NEOS's discourse

⇒ **Synonyms**

Some words clearly lie within the same semantic field as the “migration”—words such as “#Asyl” and “Asyl”.

⇒ **General language terms**

A peculiarity of the NEOS tweet corpus is that many words are used in various contexts, not necessarily related to “Migration”. For instance, tweets about “Bild” do not refer to the well-known German tabloid, but to ways in which one might view a specific conference, a body of law, social change, etc. The same goes with “Vorwurf” (allegation) or “Umgang” (the way we deal with things), or “Schutz” (protection), used several times while only once referring to border protection. Other contexts include protecting women from abusive partners and protecting populations against climate change induced heat waves. Other words used in different contexts include “Umsetzung” and “Änderung”, which both refer to “change”. What all this tells us is that NEOS, a populist liberal party, does not concern itself with migration/migrants as much as jingoistic, new far-right parties such as Germany's AfD.

⇒ **Opposition in Austrian affairs**

While NEOS's tweets are not very critical of migration policies, the party does not hesitate to criticize the government on other topics. Many of the keywords in the corpus refer to non-migration related issues in Austrian politics. “Postenschacher” refers to giving people jobs as a reward for favors, while “Bestellung” refers to appointments that may be contested. One may thus see some populism in NEOS's discourse denouncing the obscure way in which people get certain jobs owing to ties with an allegedly corrupt elite. “Hausdurchsuchung” refers to a scandal where the houses of some officials were searched on suspicions of abuse of power. “Nichtraucherschutz” (non-smoker protection) refers to changes the Austrian government made to smoking rules in hotels and bars. One word that may seem out of place in a cloud of “Migration” collocates is “Show”—but the clue is to be found in one specific tweet: “Türkis-grün (turquoise-green, the name of a government coalition): Show, Show, Show”. In other words, the government is being accused of playacting rather than actually meeting the needs of the people. Finally, “Hypo” does not refer to an insulin shortage, but to the name of an Austrian bank that was nationalised in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis and that remains a fraught political issue.

⇒ **Migration: integration and free trade.**

The two words that do refer directly to migration issues are part of a rather positive discourse. In fact, the government that NEOS is criticising embraces right-wing policies that NEOS opposes. This tweet is exemplary: “Yes, we agree with the government: we have integration problems. But our conclusion is: make the solutions big, not the problem.” Integration is possible, and the labor market is often mentioned as the best tool to achieve integration. NEOS is obviously a liberal party that sees the free market as a force for good, including in matters of employment or international trade. Such is the light in which its tweets about CETA (a controversial, provisionally applied free-trade agreement between Canada and the European Union) should be interpreted: people need not fear repercussions of this agreement since the free movement of goods is a good thing—and so is migration, being the free flow of people.

⇒ **Other big issues**

Let us finally mention collocations between “Migration” and other urgent societal issues such as “Gesundheit” (health), Klima (climate) and the “EU-Wahl” (European elections). “ORF” does not refer to a social issue, but is the name of the Austrian public broadcaster.





opportunities
for a fair narrative on migration

Figure 9: Collocations of “immigrazione” on Matteo Salvini’s Twitter account (bubble chart)

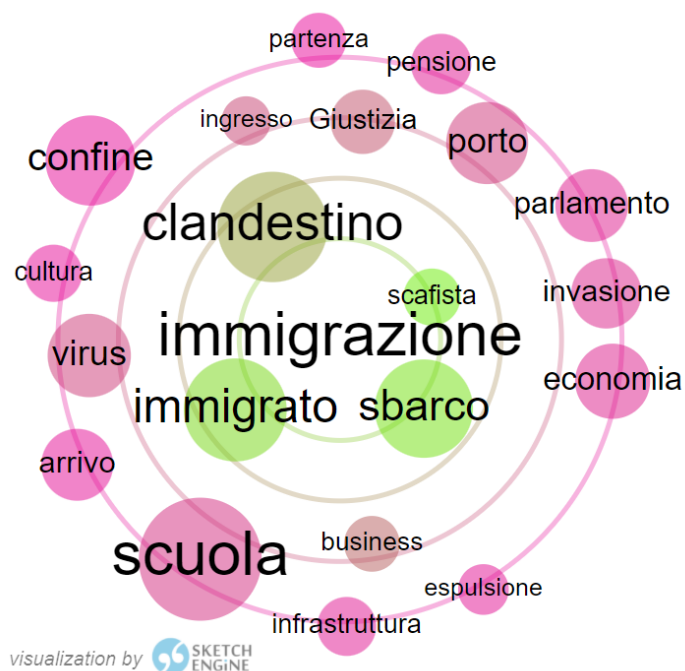


Figure 10: Collocations of “immigrazione” on Matteo Salvini’s Twitter account (numbers output in Sketch Engine)

Word	Frequency ?	Similarity ? ↓	Word	Frequency ?	Similarity ? ↓
1 scafista	115	0.153 ...	11 invasione	245	0.088 ...
2 sbarco	682	0.149 ...	12 economia	305	0.087 ...
3 immigrato	774	0.146 ...	13 parlamento	275	0.086 ...
4 clandestino	935	0.128 ...	14 infrastruttura	131	0.084 ...
5 business	105	0.108 ...	15 pensione	144	0.084 ...
6 Giustizia	180	0.103 ...	16 espulsione	70	0.083 ...
7 ingresso	61	0.099 ...	17 arrivo	264	0.082 ...
8 virus	421	0.096 ...	18 confine	531	0.081 ...
9 porto	402	0.095 ...	19 cultura	116	0.081 ...
10 scuola	1,246	0.092 ...	20 partenza	99	0.080 ...

Clusters of words in Salvini's discourse

⇒ Refugees

Matteo Salvini's tweets overwhelmingly focuses on refugees. "Immigrato" can still be considered a general word applying to any person who migrates and thus belongs in the polysemous part of the word cloud, but many other words refer directly to refugees and the refugee crisis. The focus on "confine" (borders) is a concern we also see in the AfD tweets. This logically goes together with a focus on preserving the Italian culture ("cultura"), although "culture" sometimes appears as a more general word. But many words directly refer to the process of fleeing one's country. Refugees board a ship ("imbarco") which then leaves ("partenza"). They need to find a way into Italy, which is when human traffickers ("scafisti") come in. Indeed, the smuggling of people is a "business", a word Salvini uses liberally in his tweets. After leaving their country of origin, migrants reach their destination ("arrivo") and enter Italy ("ingresso") through a border ("confine") or at a seaport ("porto"). Based on their numbers, Salvini does not hesitate to speak of an "invasion" ("invasione"). Their legal status is not always what it should be, so these refugees become "illegal immigrants" ("clandestini"). An eventual solution—one that should be chosen more often in Salvini's opinion, is expulsion ("espulsione").

⇒ The Covid-19 pandemic, an inevitable topic

As in our other tweet corpora, various problems and semantic fields collocate with "migration"—a second tendency in Salvini's tweets. The word "virus" is the same in Italian and English and speaks for itself. When we take a closer look at the tweets themselves we see that "scuola" (school) is a related theme owing to the constant need to close and reopen schools.

⇒ Social institutions in the light of opposition

Salvini mentions a number of topics and institutions such as the judicial system ("Giustizia"), politics (parlamento), pensions ("pensione"), infrastructure ("infrastruttura") and the economy ("economia"). From June 1, 2018 to August 20, 2019, he served as Interior Minister and Deputy Prime Minister under Giuseppe Conte, and our corpus includes tweets from this period. Nevertheless, Salvini is highly critical of other parties (especially those in power) in other periods covered by the corpus, as exemplified by two tweets that lash out at political theater and self-serving politicians: "This government of the incapable is massacring the Italian economy.", and "I hope that Friday ends the embarrassing theater of buying and selling senators, Italians have other problems than Conte's chair and Renzi's whims..." These criticisms resemble those of NEOS ("Show, Show, Show") in Austria. Other "migration" collocates evidence other political priorities as well.



Figure 11: Collocations of “immigrazione” on the Twitter account of Partito Democratico (bubble chart)



Figure 12: Collocations of “immigrazione” on the Twitter account of Partito Democratico (numbers output in Sketch Engine)

Word	Frequency ?	Similarity ? ↓	Word	Frequency ?	Similarity ? ↓
1 aborto	33	0.200 ...	11 ristoro	24	0.091 ...
2 semplificazione	86	0.127 ...	12 migrazione	56	0.091 ...
3 Lavoro	93	0.117 ...	13 particolare	97	0.090 ...
4 ambiente	293	0.115 ...	14 coesione	146	0.089 ...
5 legalità	296	0.104 ...	15 flusso	53	0.087 ...
6 Euro	70	0.100 ...	16 fantasma	26	0.087 ...
7 contenimento	27	0.098 ...	17 dossier	49	0.085 ...
8 sostenibilità	165	0.096 ...	18 macchina	55	0.083 ...
9 resistenza	41	0.095 ...	19 insicurezza	46	0.077 ...
10 prevenzione	158	0.094 ...	20 vicepremier	95	0.077 ...

Clusters of words in the Partito Democratico's discourse

⇒ The semantic field of migration

Some words in the corpus belong to the same semantic field as "immigrazione" (immigration). "Migrazione" (migration) is less frequently used but does appear in the collocations of "immigrazione". Another word related to "migration" is "flusso", which refers to migratory flows. It can be considered a synonym of migration.

⇒ Other themes and general words

We found no negative term about migration in the Partito Democratico's tweets. While the corpus was filtered for "migration" collocates, remarkably few word cloud items actually referred to "migration" itself. "Contenimento" and "ristoro" refer to the Covid-19 lockdowns and the aid program implemented by the Italian government to help those that most suffered from pandemic-related economic hardship. Contamination "prevention" also showed up quite a bit, as did "macchina" (car/machine) and "fantasma" (ghost)—words used in general expressions that not refer specifically to migration. "Aborto" refers to the interruption of pregnancies, a sensitive issue in the strongly catholic country of Italy, but not a migration issue. "Dossier" (file) and "vice premier" (vice prime minister) are also general words, not specifically related to migration. "Particolare" (specific), "lavoro" (work), and "ambiente" (environment) are very broad terms as well. This abundance of general language words implies that "migration" is not a key concern for the Partito Democratico. "Euro" might have more negative connotations if related to the cost of taking in migrants, but was in fact used to tweet about many different financial considerations.

⇒ The language of policy ideals

The party's tweets mention a lot of general ideals, as in this tweet: "It is a mistake to conflate the themes of security and immigration. We need to base immigration policy on legality and integration." "Legalità" is an abstract ideal that refers to many policy fields, but in this tweet it pertains to migration. "Integrazione" ("integration") is also such an ideal, although it does not score high enough to be included in the bubble chart. "La Resistenza" (Resistance) is a typically Italian ideal which harks back to the fight against Fascism in the middle of the twentieth century and remains a symbol of political integrity in contemporary Italy. "Semplificazione" (simplification) can also be viewed as a political ideal—shedding excess bureaucracy. "Sostenibilità" (sustainability) is an ideal mostly related to environmental and climate issues. "Coesione" ("cohesion") is a further social goal.

⇒ "Insecurity", an ironic term

"Insecurity" ("insicurezza") of course is not a political goal. "Security" is the name of the goal, while insecurity is the name of the threat. A closer look at the tweets reveals that the word refers to the "security decrees" implemented by Salvini and his party when they were in charge. Later more progressive politicians managed to overturn what had become known as the "insecurity decree"—a mocking, ironic term as used in this tweet: "With the vote in the Senate the immigration decree is now law. Cancelled are the insecurity decrees of Salvini. One of the ugliest pages in our history has now been turned. We return to ensure dignity, welcome, integration and full respect for human rights. Welcome back humanity!"





opportunities
for a fair narrative on migration

Figure 13: Collocations of “#migration” on the Twitter account of Fidesz (bubble chart)

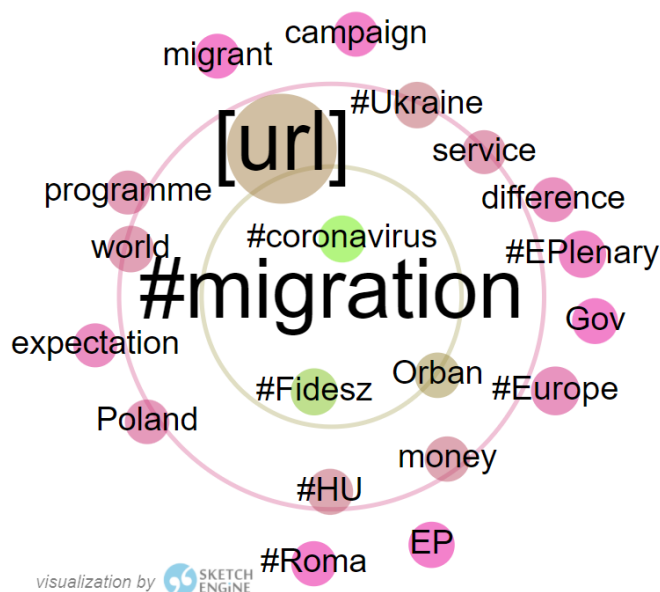


Figure 14: Collocations of “#migration” on the Twitter account of Fidesz (numbers output in Sketch Engine)

Word	Frequency ?	Similarity ? ↓	Word	Frequency ?	Similarity ? ↓
1 #coronavirus	31	0.491 ...	11 Poland	13	0.302 ...
2 #Fidesz	32	0.447 ...	12 #Europe	50	0.291 ...
3 Orban	19	0.392 ...	13 difference	14	0.286 ...
4 [url]	3,220	0.380 ...	14 expectation	10	0.281 ...
5 #Ukraine	27	0.337 ...	15 #EPenary	34	0.266 ...
6 #HU	24	0.332 ...	16 campaign	15	0.256 ...
7 money	18	0.329 ...	17 Gov	22	0.254 ...
8 world	28	0.318 ...	18 migrant	15	0.252 ...
9 service	10	0.315 ...	19 EP	25	0.252 ...
10 programme	10	0.313 ...	20 #Roma	17	0.252 ...

Clusters of words in the Fidesz discourse

⇒ **Migrants: only allowed under strict conditions**

A first element to be noticed is that in the word cloud the word “migrant” appears as rather synonymous to “migration”. In the tweet corpus of German far-right party AfD we saw that words referring to the “threat” posed by migrants and the “need” to keep them out of the country were numerous enough to be among the main collocates of the word “migration”. We did not find a similar quantitative tendency here for specific reappearing words, but looking at the actual content of the tweets, we do find a lot of similar ideas. For instance: “The #EU must send a clear message to illegal migrants: people not entitled for asylum must be sent back. Only this can stop further tragedies in the Mediterranean and guarantee a functioning asylum policy”, or “Migrants who do not respect our culture have to leave Europe”. It is worth noting that while calling for a strict immigration policy, these tweets do leave open a possibility to settle in the country for migrants who are legally entitled to immigrate and who do “respect” European culture. They are not an absolute denial of the possibility of any form of migration.

⇒ **The EU vs Hungary: two conflicting views on migration**

Words that appear often enough in the word cloud to shape quantitative tendencies have to do with “#Europe”. In the word cloud the term “difference” mostly refers to differing viewpoints on migration between the EU and Hungary. The word “money” is used in the same context. The European Union redistributes a lot of funds but, according to Fidesz, this is a way to try and blackmail Hungary. Hungary wants to crack down on migration and should be allowed to do so. This tweet sums up the disagreement nicely: “In Western #Europe they wanted to solve #demographic problems by promoting #migration. In Eastern #Europe we do not want to import other civilisations' problems to our countries.” And regarding the “blackmail” through EU subsidies: “They threaten to withhold EU money because Hungary does not accept the leftist agenda in migration and LGBTQ policy.” The conclusion is clear: “We don't care if Western Europe is building its societies according to left-liberal fantasies. But we shall not be blackmailed.”

⇒ **A positive view on the Roma minority**

The Fidesz discourse on migration is clearly right wing, so that one might be justified in expecting a negative view on indigenous minorities as well, as these have a history of integration difficulties in Hungary. Such is the case of the Roma community. But, contrary to what might be expected, the tweets about the Roma community are actually very positive, praising the Roma as a part of diversity in Hungary: “Today #8April is the International Roma Day. We celebrate #Roma culture, wonderful values, linguistic diversity, history, all the will and perseverance that characterize the Roma - Happy International Roma Day! God bless all my Roma sisters and brothers!” Another tweet expresses similar sentiments regarding the Holocaust: “August 2 is Roma Holocaust Memorial Day. Today we remember the Roma victims of the Holocaust, the victims of racism and exclusion. #WeRemember”. In a way this positive appreciation of an indigenous minority that faced racism in World War 2 resembles the stance of Sebastian Kurz on antisemitism. Notwithstanding the reservations Kurz and Fidesz have towards “new” minorities, they take pains to avoid accusations of racism towards historic minorities.

⇒ **A focus on countries with regional affinities**

Furthermore Poland and Ukraine are mentioned often enough to be part of the word cloud. They often appear in Fidesz tweets owing to regional affinities. Tweet content is somewhat different,





opportunities

for a fair narrative on migration

however: Poland is “a “brother in arms” because like Hungary it favours right-wing policies: “Hungary stands firm by Poland. The @Europarl_EN decision on Thursday, the latest chapter in EU liberals' offensive against Christian, conservative Poland lacks any factual basis. Poland's rule of law is perfectly up to European standards.” The tone on Ukraine is more critical, as shown by the following two tweets: “#Ukraine Must Fulfill its Obligations Toward National #Minorities - says MEP Bocskor” and “We find disgraceful and deeply condemn the use of armed force by #Ukraine against leaders and organizations of the Hungarian community in Transcarpathia”.

⇒ **Some more general words**

“Service”, “programme”, “expectation”, “campaign” and “world” are general words that are used in different contexts. The Covid-19 pandemic is also an important theme for Fidesz. “#Fidesz”, “Orban”, “EP”, and “#Plenary” (European Parliament) are some other proper nouns that appear in the word cloud. [URL] appears very often, but is merely a word that introduces a quoted website.

6. Discussion and conclusion

We hypothesised that analyzing the tweets of Austrian, German, Italian and Hungarian politicians representing two opposing political traditions would evince two clearly different discourses. On the one hand, traditional parties with traditional ideologies from all sides of the political spectrum (conservative, liberal, centrist, socialist) would favor the discourse of openness, while on the other hand nationalist/new far-right parties would favor the discourse of closure. This difference was indeed clear, and word clouds allowed us to trace the semantic specificities of each discourse.

“Borders” are a crucial ingredient of the right-wing discourse. A further worry in the (radical) right-wing discourse is the threat of Islamism and radicalization, which is also a central worry of traditionalist conservative Sebastian Kurz. Among the politicians whose tweets we analyzed, Salvini focuses the most on refugees and the different stages of their ordeal, from departure to arrival. Another right-wing/far-right theme, especially prominent in the AfD’s discourse, is “the will of the people”. Ruth Breeze calls this phenomenon (2020: 550-551) “the identification with the virtuous people against a treacherous or exploitative elite”. Indeed, a strange coalition between the poor (refugees and migrants) and the very powerful left-liberal elite is suspected. In the Hungarian case, the left-liberal elite is also seen as the voice of the European Union, trying to deny Hungarian self-determination.

29 In addition to borders, “integration” seems to be the key word in the tweets of the traditional parties. Inclusion and cohesion are the answers when integration problems do arise. According to Italy’s socialist Partito Democratico, it is a mistake to conflate the security and integration issues. Germany’s CDU and Austria’s NEOS also favour integration. Sebastian Kurz also calls for more integration, but with quite a few caveats.

We did find some ‘safety valves’ in the discourse of left-wing and right-wing politicians. Sebastian Kurz, who is both critical and encouraging towards integration, also speaks out against anti-Semitism. Hungary’s Fidesz party stresses the importance of protecting the Roma minority. Austrian right-wing/far-right sympathizers often express a hatred of Jews and the Roma people. And yet rejecting immigration does not necessarily imply such enduring hatred in Austria and Hungary. Kurz and the Fidesz party are wary of immigration while taking pains to avoid coming across as racists.

In their classic book on cultural values, Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov specifically refer to Austria and its historic problems with anti-Semitism (2010: 224-226) as a consequence of a high degree of uncertainty avoidance. In countries with high uncertainty avoidance people are afraid of ambiguous situations. Hofstede et al. (2010) consider dealing with minorities—including historic minorities—as such an ambiguous situation. The authors also note that these countries harbor strong civil movements against the discrimination of minorities. Negative attitudes towards minorities imply a heated debate about the status of minorities, while in societies with less uncertainty avoidance the debate tends to be less heated. This Hofstedian framework fits the Austrian case well, with Austria scoring 70 out of 100 on uncertainty avoidance. Hungary has an even higher score with 82 and indeed our data evidence Hungarian attention to the Roma minority.

Since this issue with historic minorities is visible in our Hungarian and Austrian Twitter data but not in our German and Italian data, we would expect the uncertainty scores in Germany and Italy to be lower.





opportunities

for a fair narrative on migration

In fact, Germany and Italy score rather high on uncertainty avoidance, with values of 65 (Germany) and 75 (Italy). We might thus conclude that based on our data Hofstede's framework only predicts problems with historic minorities in Austria and Hungary, failing to detect an absence of such problems in Germany and Italy. A more plausible explanation is that our Twitter data come from specific Twitter accounts, so that the lack of evidence of historic traumas in the German and Italian data has to do with incomplete representativity. Investigating more discursive material in Germany and Italy would most certainly highlight heated discussions about their Nazi and Fascist pasts. As it is, our material only covers a small slice of these two countries' discursive reality.

Yet another "safety valve" is a focus on order and security in the CDU's discourse. Just as the right-wing/far-right parties strive to avoid being blamed for historic racism, the more traditional, centrist CDU does not want to be called out as being naïve. We find a similar focus in the discourse of Austria's NEOS ("of course there are problems"), intent on thwarting any accusations of 'angelism' from their right-wing opponents.

Looking at collocates of "migration" we inevitably come across words that belong to the same semantic sphere and have a high degree of synonymity. Another trend has to do with mentioning other major societal issues such as the Covid-19 pandemic or climate change. Here the difference between the traditional and new far-right politicians is clear, with the former tending to view migration as an issue among others, while the latter vociferously fixate on it—they "own" the migration issue.

A final pattern is a use of tweets to attack other political parties—a "language of antagonism" found among both traditional and new far-right politicians. For instance, Italy's Partito Democratico uses the term "insecurity decree" to mock the "security laws" Matteo Salvini had passed in the short period he was in charge. Austria's liberal NEOS party is strongly critical of the country's governing parties. Looking at the issue from a somewhat different angle—"populist" language in tweets in six democracies (Switzerland, Germany, France, Italy, the UK and the USA)—Ernst et al. (2017) found that opposition parties use more populist language on Twitter and Facebook. Although our research does not focus on populism per se, it does show that being in the opposition leads to adopting a specific "opposition" lexicon. Van Kessel and Castelein (2016) studied adversarial language in the tweets of Dutch radical left party SP and Dutch radical right party PVV, concluding that both use a specific "adversarial language" and wondering whether this was a universal trend, to be found outside the Netherlands. Our research does confirm the wider and more international existence of such an "adversarial discourse".

In all, we can very largely see our hypothesis confirmed. We do see a clear divide between the discourse of openness and the discourse of closure in the tweets of politicians and political parties in Austria, Germany, Italy, and Hungary. Researchers in "538", a US political research group, tried to categorise the words to be found in US political tweets (Hopkins, 2017). Their conclusion was clear: "Political Twitter is no place for moderates". While a proper comparison of US and European data would require us to directly investigate both US and European tweets based on the same methodology, our results clearly point in the same direction. In his book "Het land van aankomst" (2007) [the land of arrival], Dutch political scientist Paul Scheffer stated that the crucial challenge of our time is to invent ways to shape citizenship in a nation without borders. Our analysis shows that politicians with such wildly differing opinions would embrace very different strategies towards such a new citizenship.

Carrella (2018) made a comparison between populist and non-populist politicians and from his point of view the distinction between the populist language use of both groups was not particularly clear-cut, while in our study the distinction between "the discourse of openness" and "the discourse of closure"

was much more explicit. Traditional politicians may go for some populist wording now and then, but content-wise they mostly avoid the anti-immigration rhetoric of their right-wing/far-right colleagues.

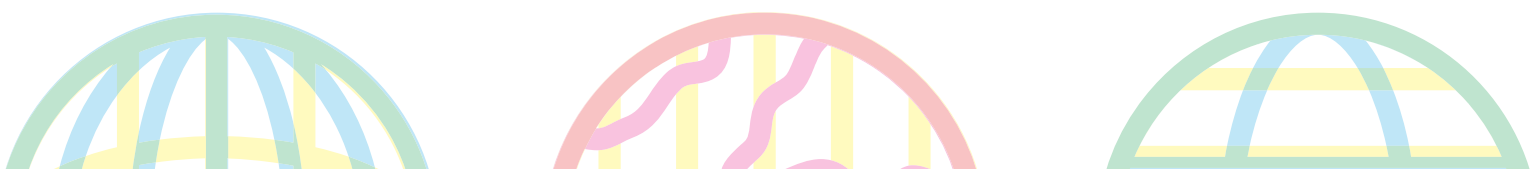
7. Suggestions for further research

While we focused on tweet content, another research angle could be to look at the structure of the Twitter network as a social network: who follows whom? Vilella et al. (2020) used such an approach to analyze the immigration-centric Italian Twittersphere, finding that content-wise differentiation goes together with clearly segregated communities of users. Proponents of the (online) filter bubble theory (Pariser, 2011) stress that within non-diverse, closed discussion/readership groups that leave no room for alternative voices, opinions tend to swirl around like sound in an echo chamber (Koshravinik, 2017), locking users into their own beliefs. At least one of the conditions for such a phenomenon is met: there are widely diverging lexicons. A further study of the community structure could provide additional insights and will be presented in a separate deliverable for the “OPPORTUNITIES” project (Deliverable 4.8).

Aleksandra Urman (2020) calls this phenomenon “audience duplication”. She studied the degree of shared views among Twitter users from different parties in Germany, Austria, and Italy (but not Hungary), coming to the conclusion that Germany is less polarised than Austria and Italy. From our standpoint these findings are not relevant, however, because while Germany might have more audience duplication among many parties, the specific Twitter accounts of the AfD and the CDU are strongly polarised, as found by Urman. What we do derive from comparing our data with those of Urman is not only that AfD and CDU users do not overlap, but that they see very different content as well. It should be noted though that Morstatter et al. (2018) did find some interactions between an online community one might call AfD sympathizers and another one that exhibits wider ranging interests in Germany’s politics, so that research findings are inconclusive regarding the precise position of the AfD in the German Twittersphere and its overlap with other parties.

The data on differences were derived from a data exercise based on the objective rates of occurrence in word clouds, a subsequent qualitative analysis of the ways these words are “glued” together. It can be assumed that a further-reaching qualitative analysis of individual tweets will highlight more clearly the use of specific linguistic strategies. We sketched the latter using quantitatively calculated word clouds as a point of departure. Yet another strategy is to manually code tweets using a preexisting coding scheme with variables in a statistical program such as SPSS, for instance. See Alsharami (2020) who gives an overview of many text analysis possibilities in his review of 41 papers pertaining to the “linguistic implications of political tweets”).

As we focused on messages posted on a specific social media platform—Twitter—in four countries and representing only seven parties, it is obvious that further comparisons with more parties in more countries would be instructive. The comparison scope could also include potential differences across different social media or between social media and traditional media. A further twist (see, Quinlan et al., 2017) would be to compare tweet dynamics in routine times with tweets in election times.





References

- Abdeslam, A. A. (2019). The representation of Islam and Muslims in French print media discourse: Le Monde and Le Figaro as case studies. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 39 (4): 569-581.
- AJC (American Jewish Committee) (2018). *Austrian Chancellor Kurz Delivers Powerful Message of Responsibility at AJC Global Forum*. <https://www.ajc.org/news/austrian-chancellor-kurz-delivers-powerful-message-of-responsibility-at-ajc-global-forum>
- Alcántara-Plá, M. & Ruiz-Sánchez, A. (2017). The framing of Muslims on the Spanish Internet. *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics*, 13 (2): 261-283.
- Alshahrani, A. (2020). Linguistic implications of political tweets. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 10 (4): 203-216.
- Breeze, R. (2020). Exploring populist styles of political discourse in Twitter. *World Englishes*, 39: 550–567.
- Carrella, F. (2018). Analysis of the correlation between populist discourse and Tweet popularity. *Colloquium: New Philologies*, 3 (2): 27-50.
- Carta di Roma. (2018). *Notizie di chiusura. Sesto rapporto Carta di Roma 2018*. <https://www.cartadiroma.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Notizie-di-chiusura.pdf>
- Donadio, R. (2019). Macron and Salvini: Two leaders, two competing visions for Europe. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/05/emmanuel-macron-matteo-salvini-europe/589753/>
- Entman, R. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43: 51-58.
- Ernst, N., Engesser, S., Büchel, F., Blassnig, S. & Esser, F. (2017). Extreme parties and populism: An analysis of Facebook and Twitter across six countries. *Information, Communication & Society*, 20 (9): 1347-1364.
- Filmer, D. (2021). Salvini, stereotypes and cultural translation: Analysing anglophone news discourse on Italy's 'little Mussolini'. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 21 (3): 335-351.
- Herman, O., Jakubíček, M., Rychlý, P. & Kovár, V. (2019). Word sense induction using word sketches. In: Martín-Vide, C., Purver, M. & Pollak, S. (2019) (Eds.) *Statistical language and speech processing 7th International Conference, SLSP 2019 Ljubljana, Slovenia, October 14–16, 2019 Proceedings* (pp. 83-91). Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
- Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J. & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the mind*. McGraw-Hill.

Hopkins, D. (2017). Political Twitter is no place for moderates. *FiveThirtyEight*. <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/political-twitter-is-no-place-for-moderates/>

Kilgariff A, Baisa V., Bušta J., Jakubíček, M., Kovář, V., Michelfeit, J., Rychlý, P., & Suchomel, V. (2014) The Sketch Engine: Ten years on. *Lexicography ASIALEX*, 1: 7-36.

Kilgariff A., & Tugwell, D. (2002) Sketching words. In: Corréard, M (Ed.), *Lexicography and Natural Language Processing: A festschrift in honour of B.T.S. Atkins* (pp. 125-137). EURALEX.

Khosravinik, M. (2017). Right wing populism in the West: Social media discourse and echo chambers. *Insight Turkey*, 19 (3): 53-68.

Lin, D. (1998). Automatic retrieval and clustering of similar words. *Proceedings of COLING/ACL-98* (pp. 768-774). Montreal.

Matthes, J. & Kohring, M. (2008). The content analysis of media frames: Toward improving reliability and validity. *Journal of Communication*, 58 (2): 258–279.

Morstatter, F., Shao, Y., Galstyan, A., & Karunasekera, S. (2018). From alt-right to alt-rechts: Twitter analysis of the 2017 German federal election. *Companion of the The Web Conference 2018 on The Web Conference 2018* (pp. 621-628).

Musolff, A. (2014). From social to biological parasites and back: The conceptual career of a metaphor. *Contributions to the History of Concepts*, 9: 18-32.

Nicasio Varea, B., Pérez Gabaldón, M., Chavez, M. (2020). Using social media to motivate anti-migration sentiments. Political implications in the United States and beyond. *Tripodos. Blanquerna School of Communication and International Relations*, 49: 51-69.

Pariser, E. (2011). *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet is hiding from you*. Penguin.

Quinlan, S., Gummer, T., Roßmann, J. & Wolf, C. (2018). 'Show me the money and the party!' – variation in Facebook and Twitter adoption by politicians. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21 (8): 1031-1049.

Rauchfleisch, A. & Metag, J. (2020). Beyond normalization and equalization on Twitter: Politicians' Twitter use during non-election times and influences of media attention. *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies*, 9 (2): 169-189.

Schäfer, M.S. & O'Neill, S. (2017). Frame analysis in climate change communication: Approaches for assessing journalists' minds, online communication and media portrayals. In: M. Nisbet, S. Ho, E. Markowitz & S. O'Neill, M.S. Schäfer & J. Thaker, J. (Eds.) *Oxford encyclopedia of climate change communication*. Oxford University Press.

Scheffer, P. (2007). *Het land van aankomst*. De Bezige Bij.





opportunities

for a fair narrative on migration

The Economist (2016). *Globalisation and politics. Drawbridges up*. <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2016/07/30/drawbridges-up>.

Urman, A. (2020). Context matters: Political polarization on Twitter from a comparative perspective. *Media, Culture and Society*, 42 (6): 857-879.

Vilella, S., Lai, M., Paolotti, D. & Ruffo, G. (2020). Immigration as a divisive topic: Clusters and content diffusion in the Italian Twitter debate. *Future Internet*, 12 (10): 173.

York, J. (2021, May 26). Immigration is an opportunity for France, says President Macron. *The Connexion*. <https://www.connexionfrance.com/French-news/Immigration-is-an-opportunity-for-France-says-President-Macron>

Zaghi, M. (2018, October 4). Macron Vs Orbán and Salvini: the debate on Twitter between openness and closure. *EuVisions*. <http://www.euvisions.eu/macron-vs-orban-and-salvini-an-online-debate-between-openess-and-closure/>