

# Canada's Response to **Economic** Impacts of COVID-19

 CBC  
NEWS

**Dr. Amanda J. Cheney**  
**December 8, 2020**

A photograph of Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, standing at a podium and speaking into a microphone. He is wearing a dark suit and a white shirt. The podium has a large red graphic on it with white text. The background shows a brick building with white columns and a dark door.

[CANADA.CA/CORONAVIRUS](https://canada.ca/coronavirus)  
[CANADA.CA/LE-CORONAVIRUS](https://canada.ca/le-coronavirus)

Canada

# Canadian Emergency Response Benefit **CERB**

Justin Trudeau is shown from the chest up, standing behind a podium and speaking into a microphone. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt. The background shows a building with white columns and red brick walls.

[CANADA.CA/CORONAVIRUS](https://canada.ca/coronavirus)  
[CANADA.CA/LE-CORONAVIRUS](https://canada.ca/le-coronavirus)

Canada



# **Canadian Emergency Response Benefit CERB**



# **Canadian Recovery Benefit CRB**

Canada

# 24%

**Canadian residents received CERB**



**Matt**  
@gmatt1313

Replying to @WeAreCanProud

The endless breadlines we are seeing in the USA would be here if it were not for the CERB program which @erinotoole has already said does not work and would eliminate.

5:39 PM · Nov 22, 2020 · Twitter Web App



**James Kirk**  
@kirkJK04

Replying to @MoonGlo33 @SaskLass and 4 others

'Do not impose a stop pay': Federal workers ordered to ignore cheating in CERB and EI claims  
A memo told employees not to halt payment or trigger investigations for potential abuse, while department has suspended 'compliance and enforcement' of EI program

3:44 PM · May 16, 2020 · Twitter Web App



**Canadiangirl**  
@Canada68188830

Replying to @nightmezzz

The CERB has paid out \$43.51 billion to 8.41 million people as of June 4. The parliamentary budget officer estimates in a new report that it will cost the federal government \$17.9 billion to provide eight extra weeks of payments through the CERB real numbers.

4:10 PM · Jul 9, 2020 · Twitter for Android



**CanadalsPracticingEugenicsWithDisabledPeople**  
@MY\_KINDA\_SEX\_ED

Replying to @JustinTrudeau

You know the drill;  
WHERE IS THE HELP FOR #PWD TO STAY HOME SAFELY?  
WHY DID YOU MAKE DISABLED PPL  
#MarginalizedNotVulnerable BY FORCING #PWD TO BEG AT FOOD BANKS?  
WHY DO YOU THINK PWD CAN SURVIVE ON 1/2 OF CERB?  
WHY DO YOU HATE DISABLED PPL?  
WHY ARE YOU NEGLECTING PWD?

6:05 PM · Nov 23, 2020 · Twitter for Android



**Frances**  
@no\_name\_fran

CAN WE JUST GET A FULL ASS LOCKDOWN AND NOT THESE HALF ASSED ONES?? LIKE JUST LOCK EVERYTHING DOWN FOR A MONTH AND GIVE OUT CERB AND FREEZE RENT AND DON'T EVICT PPL AND SAVE LIVES YOU MORONS

4:45 PM · Nov 20, 2020 · Twitter Web App



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**James Kirk**

# What are the main clusters of Twitter conversations about CERB/CRB?



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Replying to @nightmezzz

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4:45 PM · Nov 20, 2020 · Twitter Web App

# Identify main clusters of Twitter conversations about CERB and CRB

**250,000+ tweets from March 1 - Dec 1, 2020, collected using Tweepy and snsrape**

**HDBSCAN to identify 5 dense, high level clusters and KMeans to identify 7 clusters of everyday conversations**

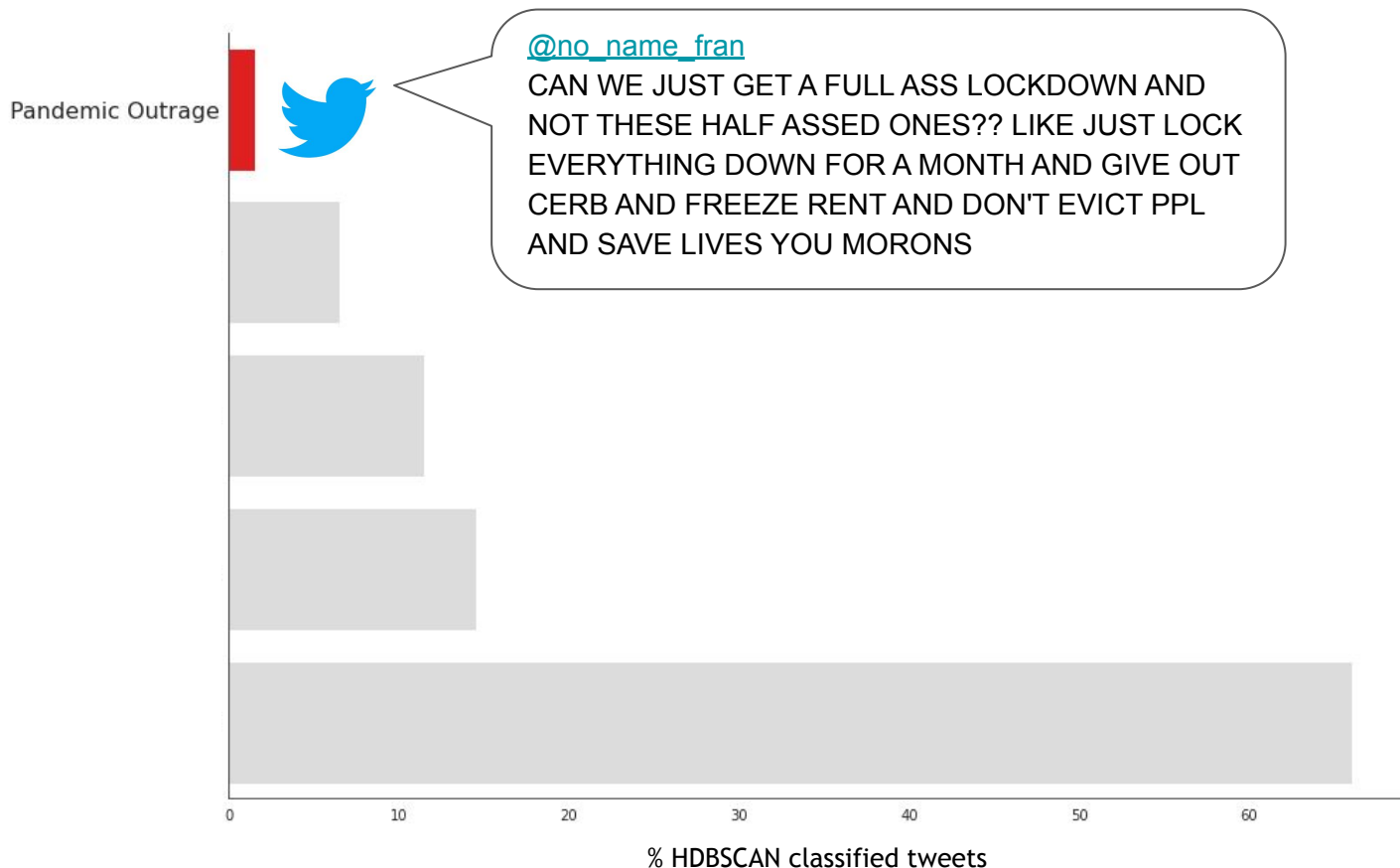
**Transfer learning from Godin (2019) Twitter embeddings library and FastText to create document embeddings**



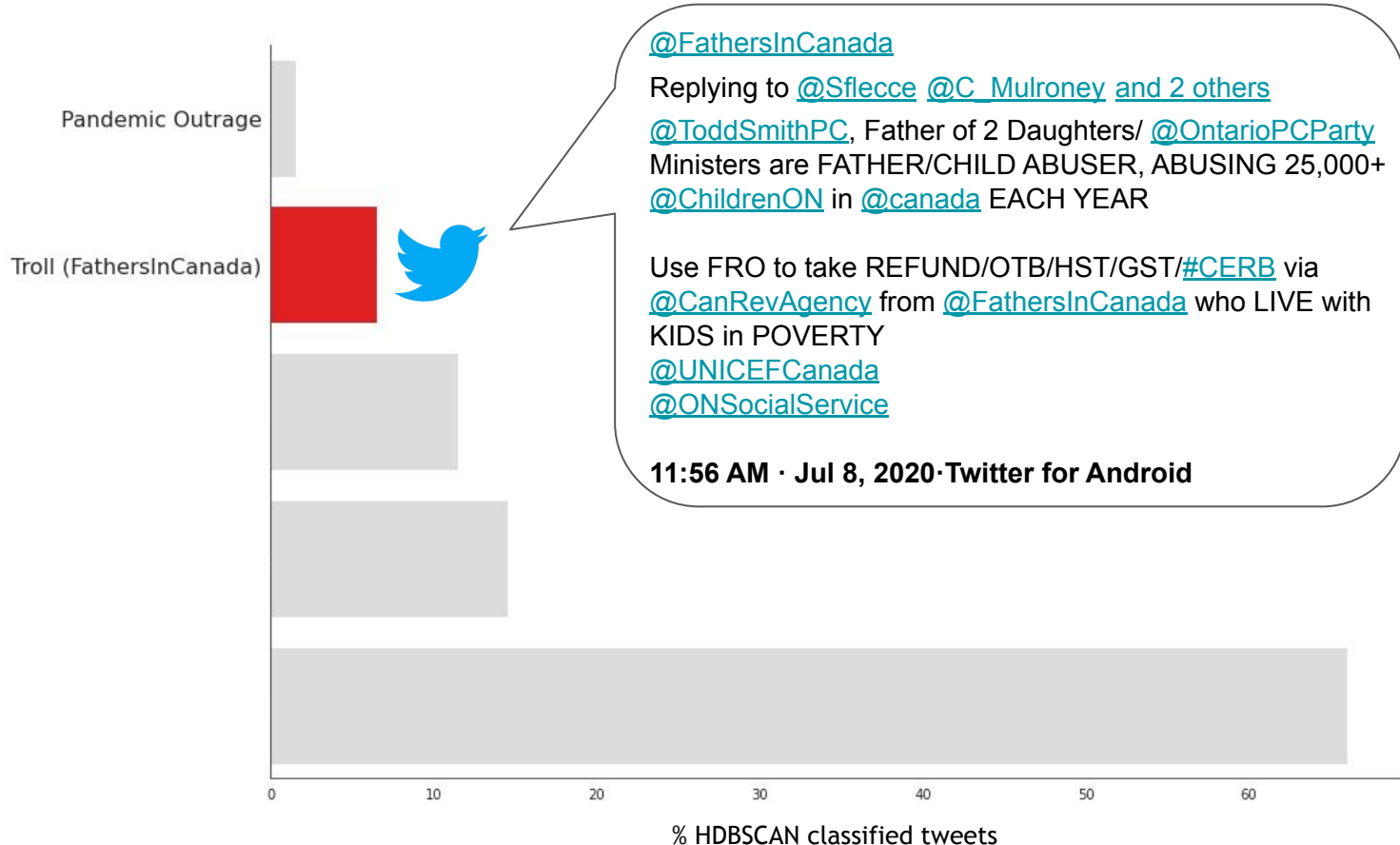


# Subjects of densest Tweet clusters

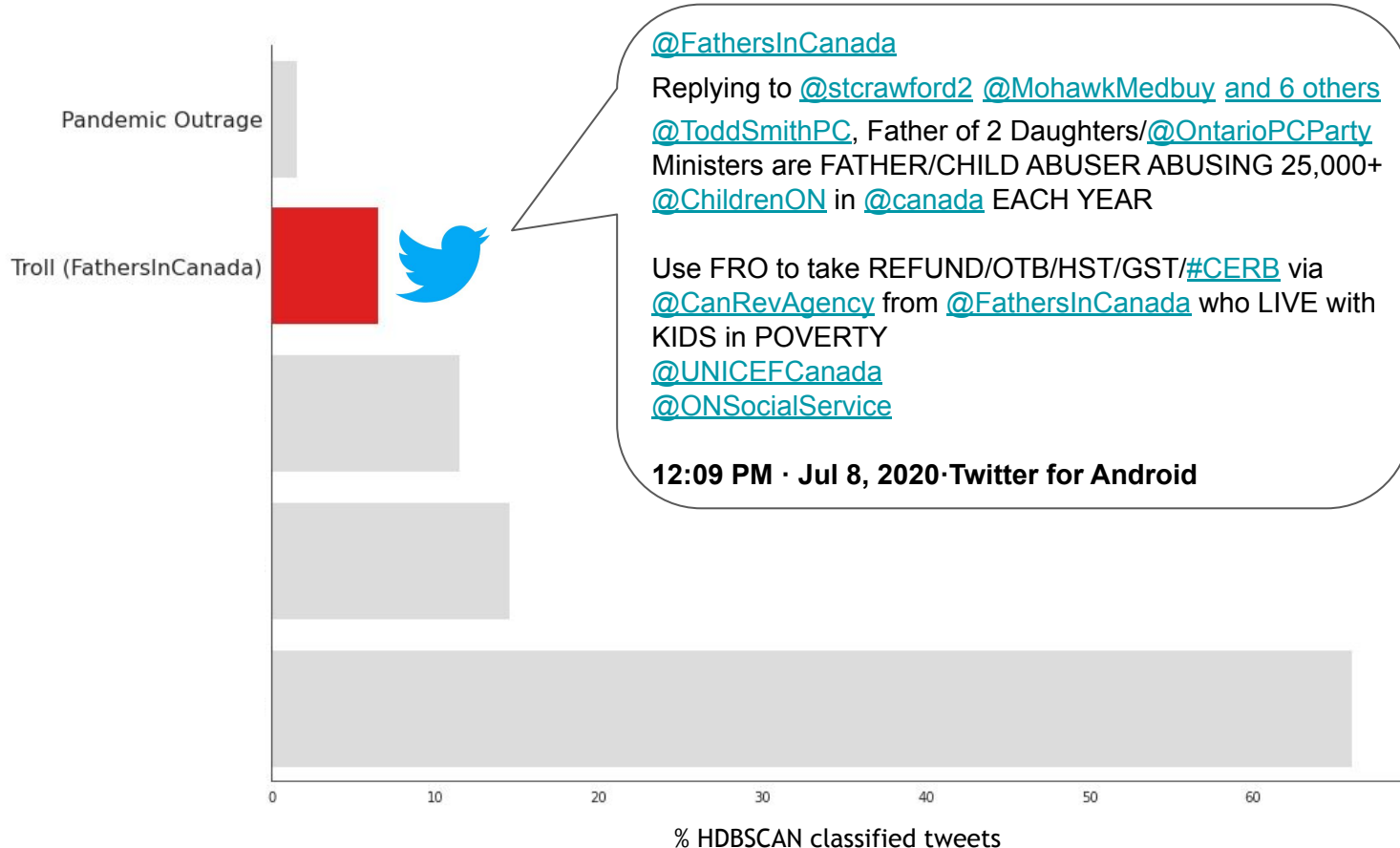
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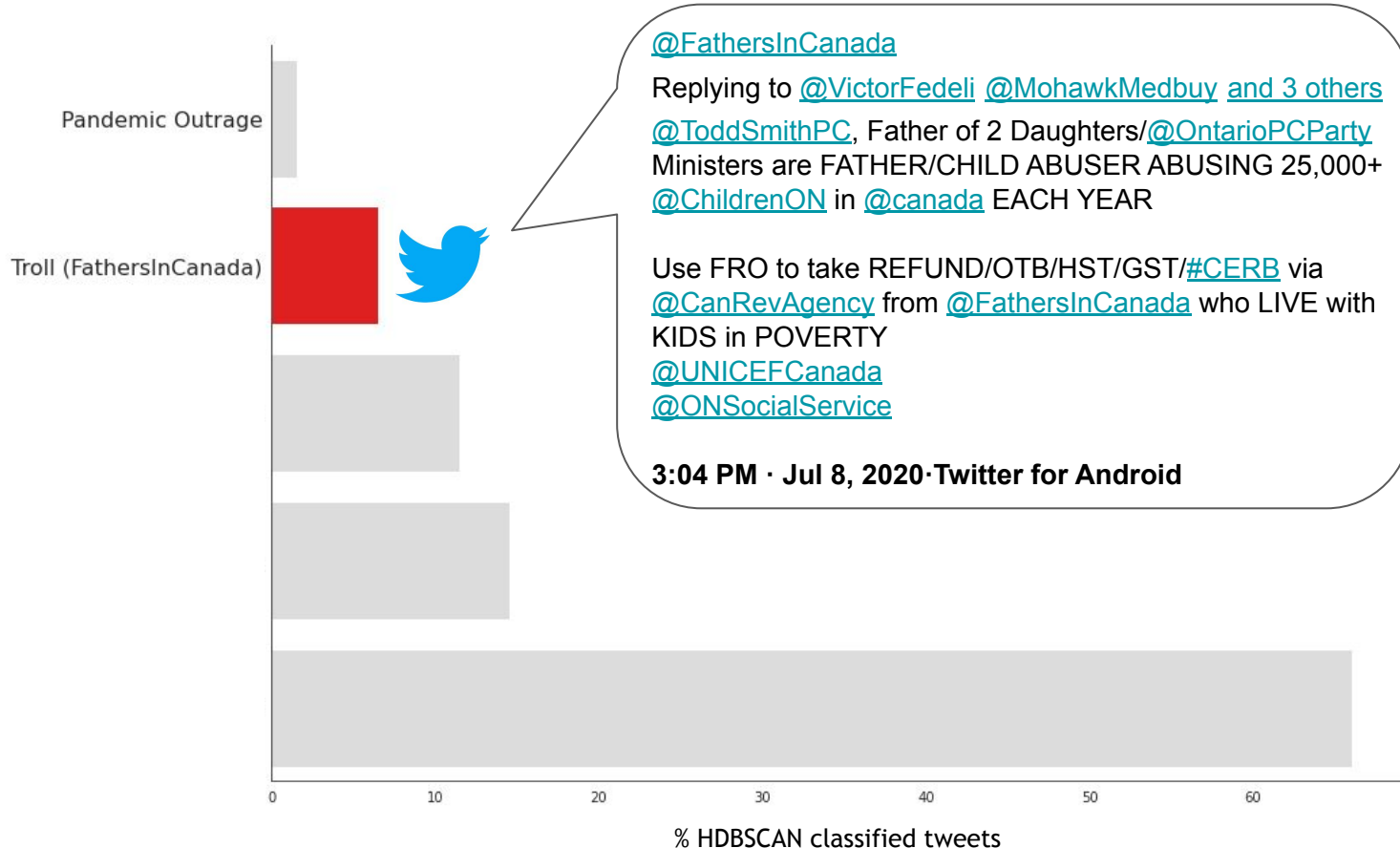


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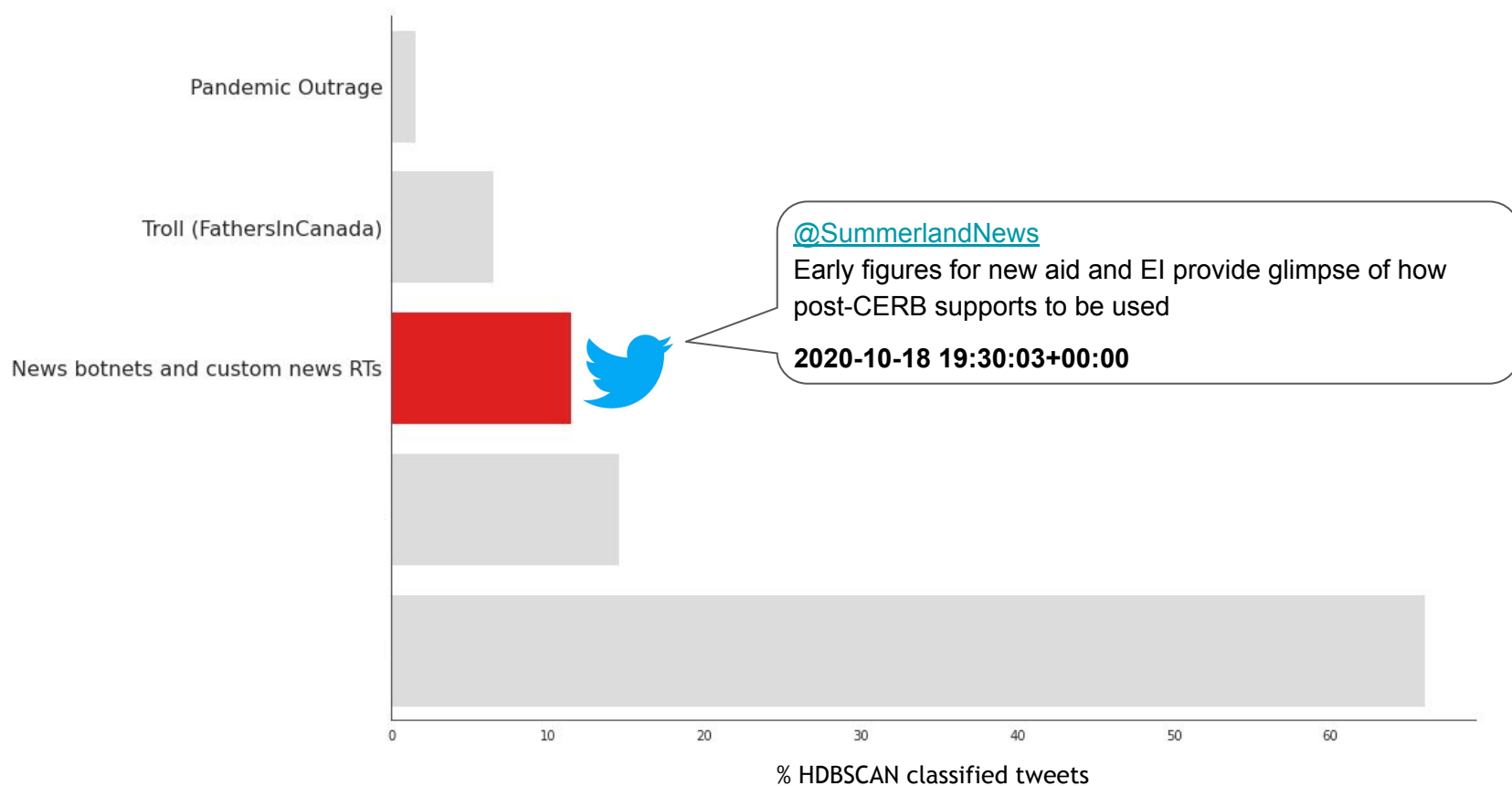




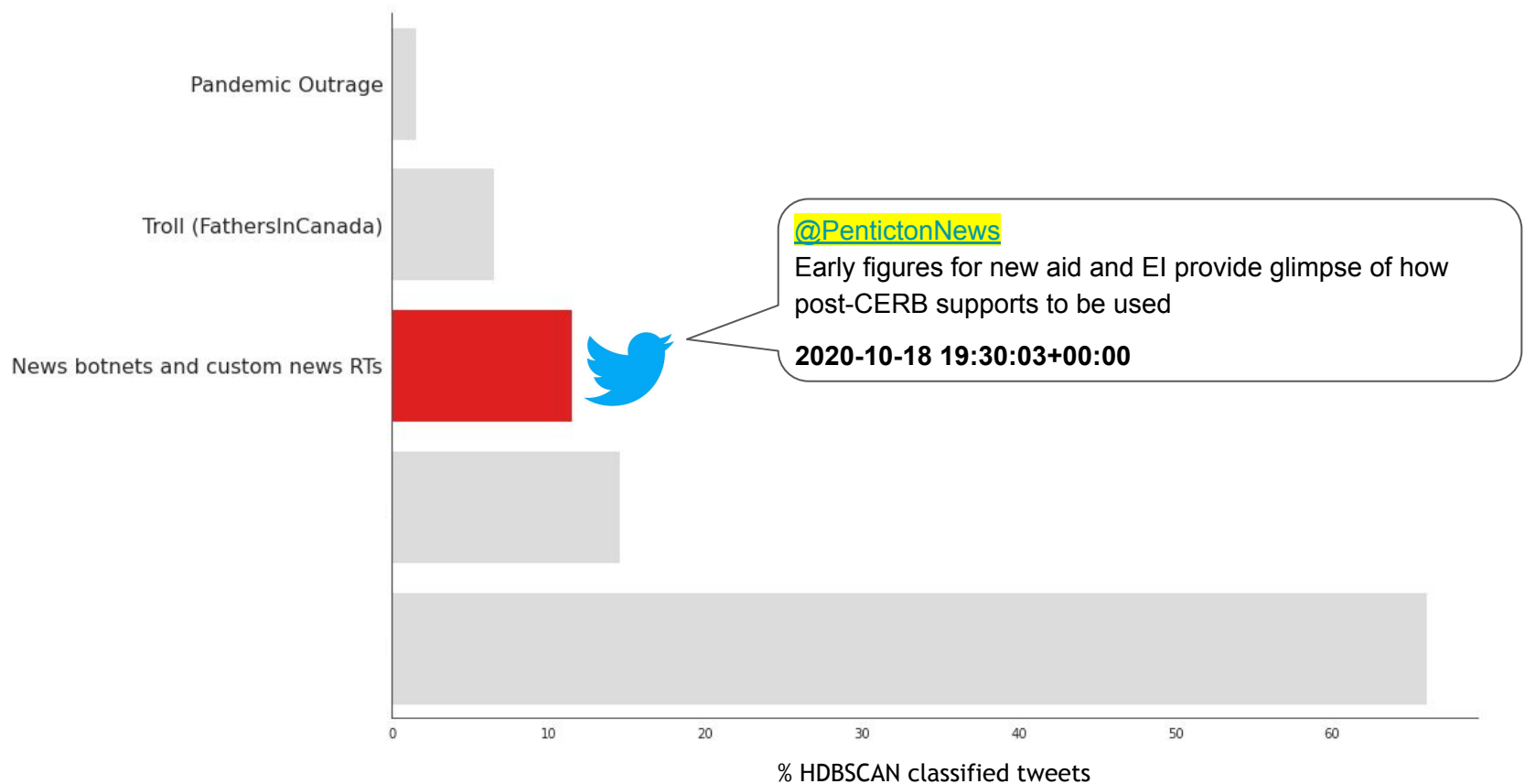
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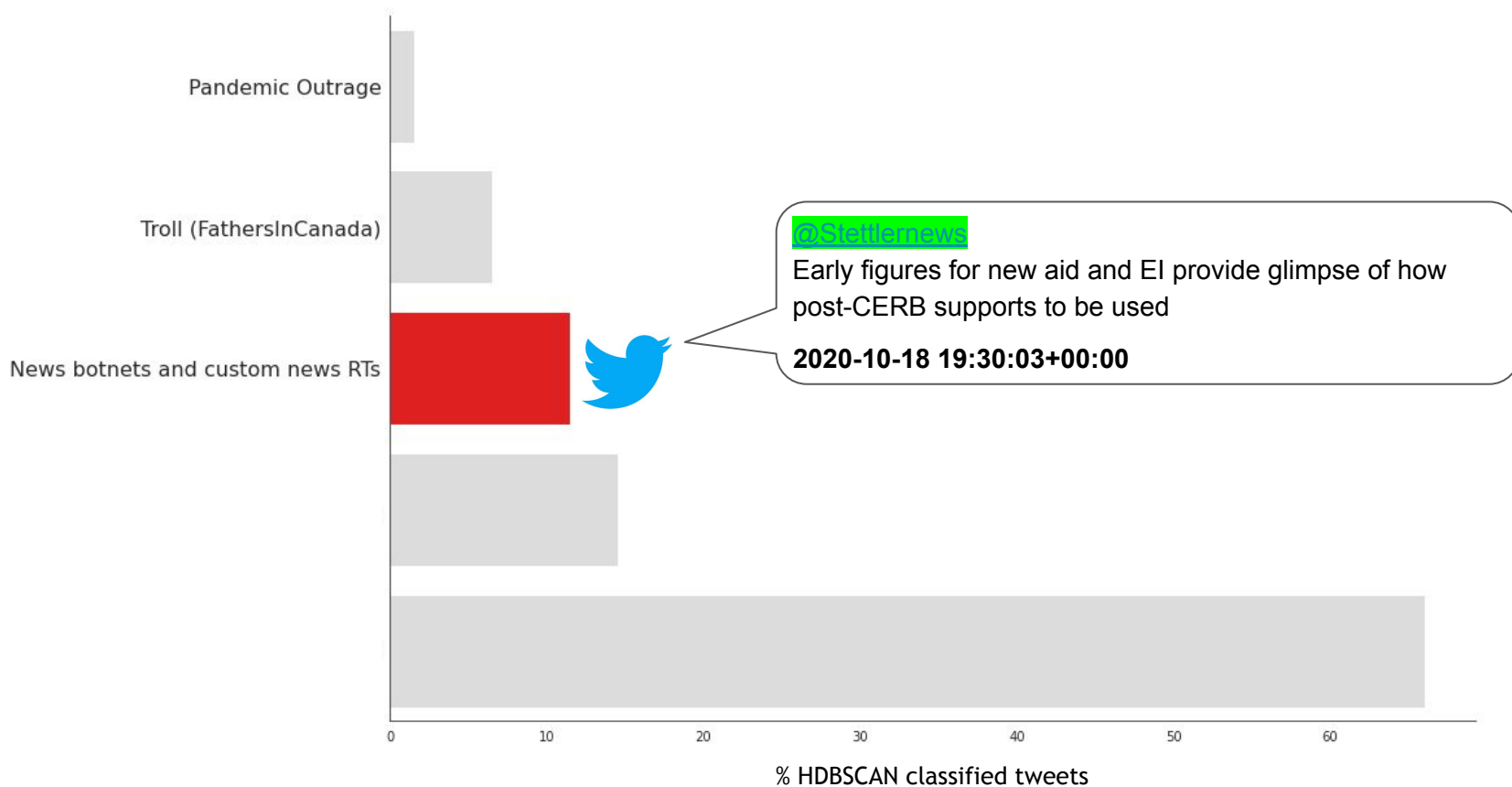
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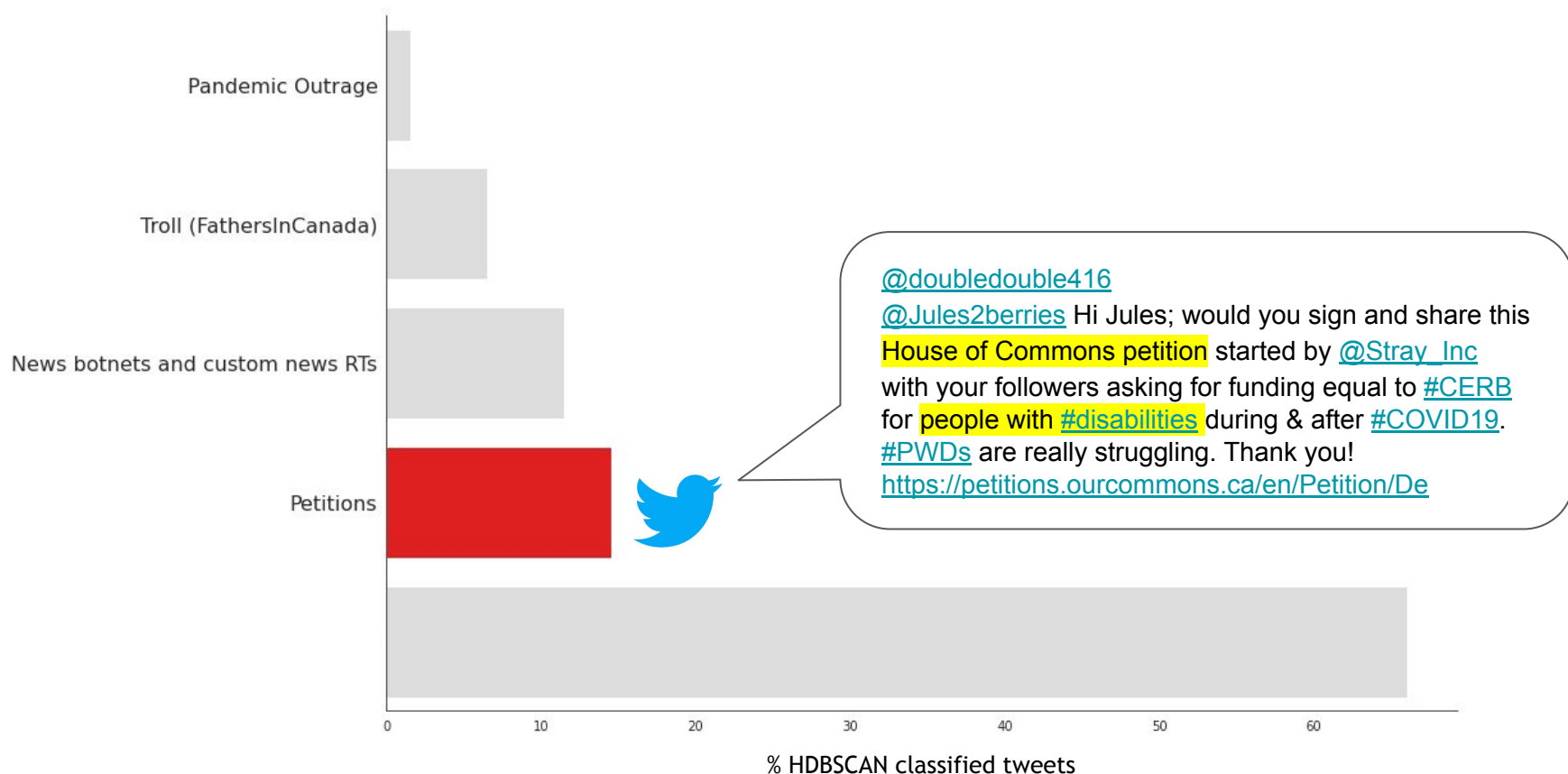


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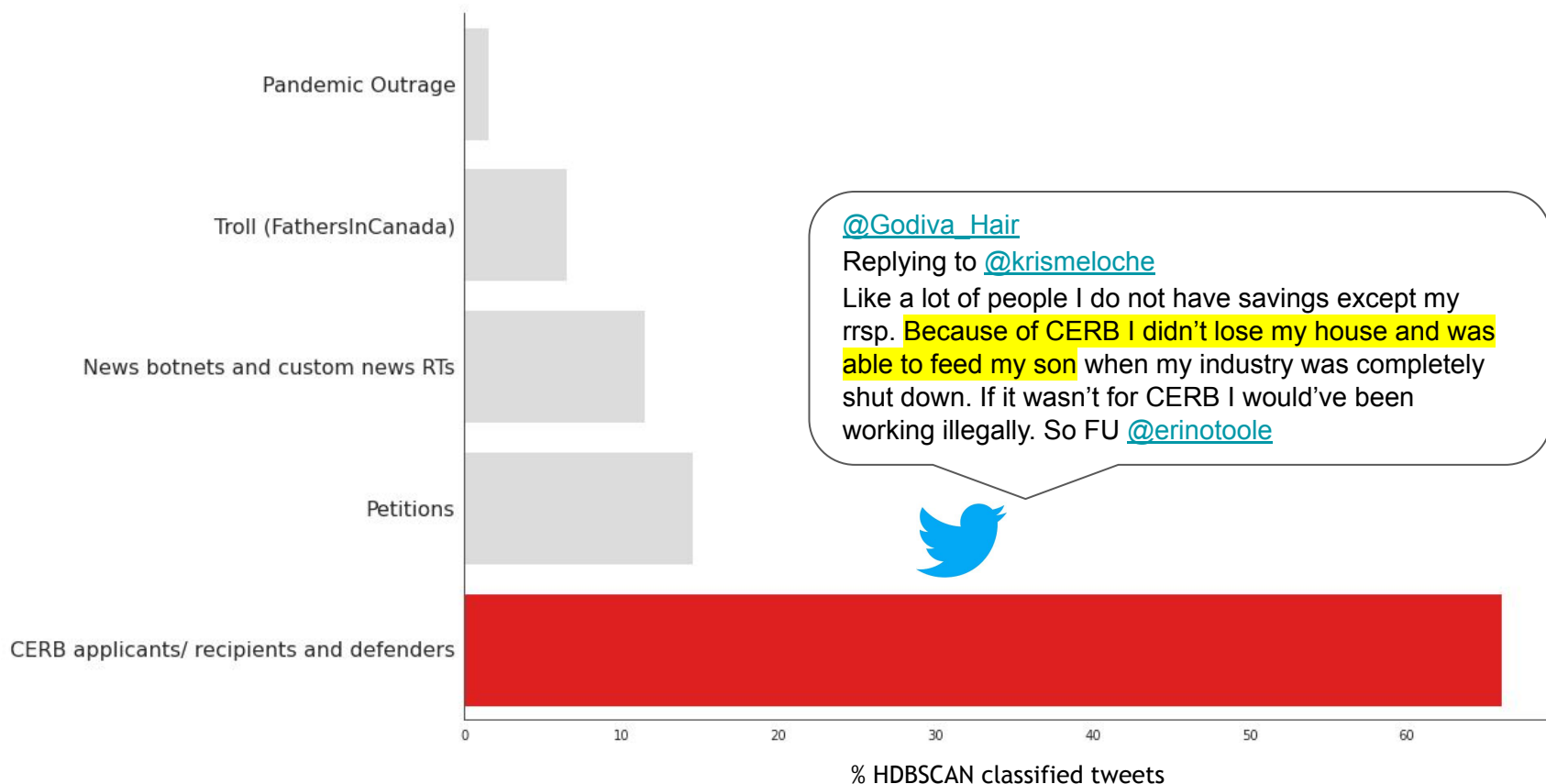




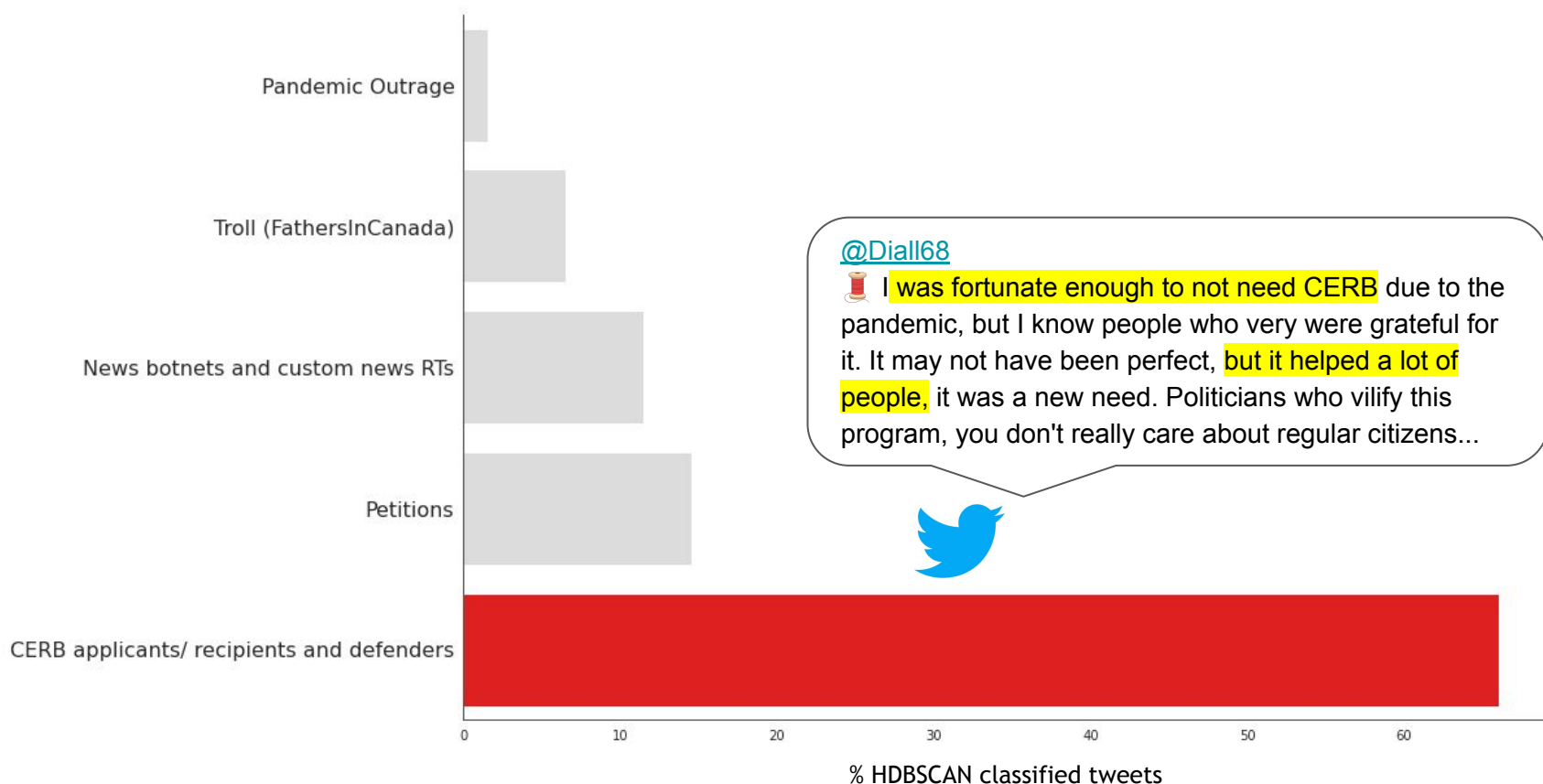
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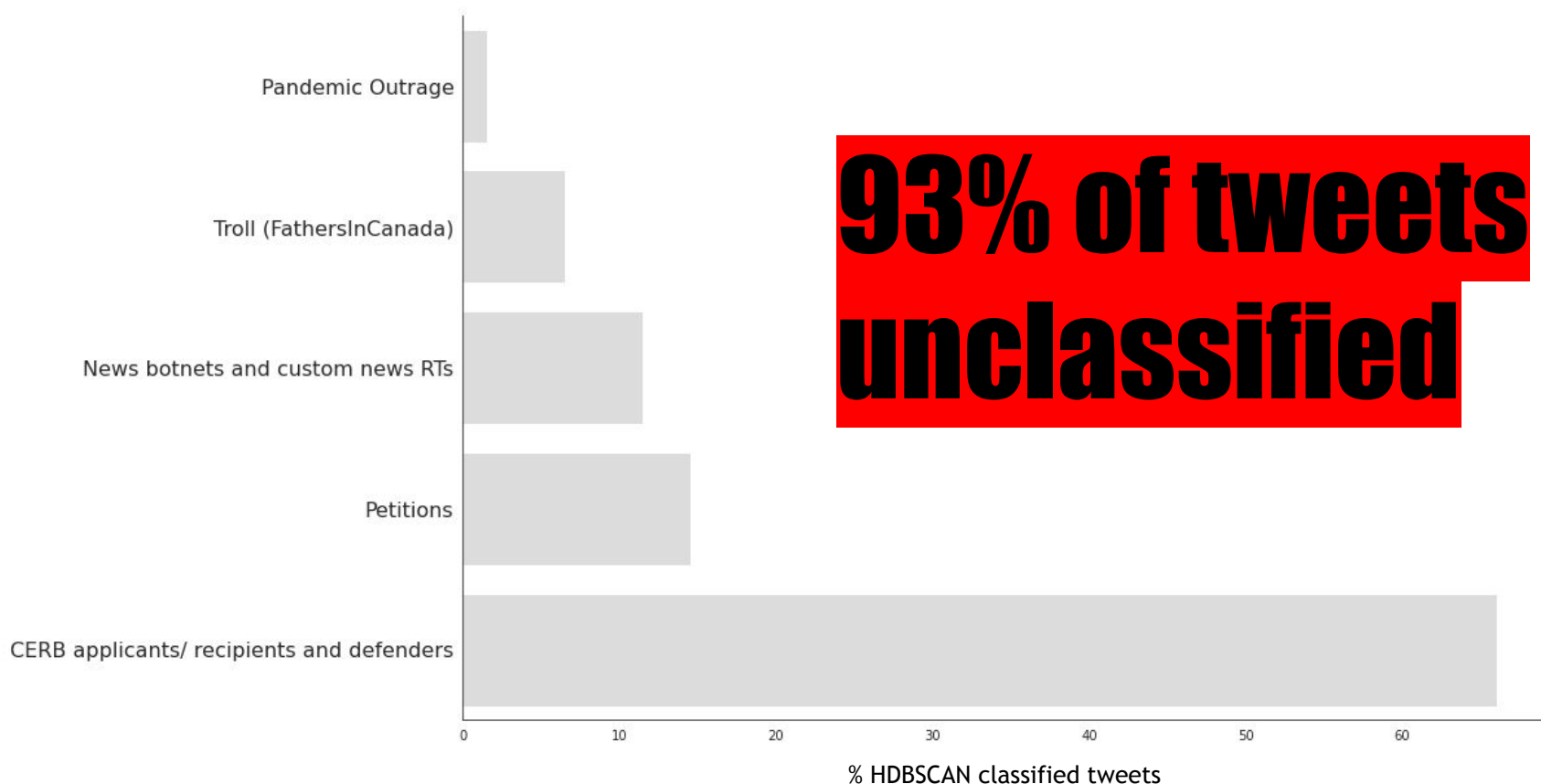
# Subjects of densest Tweet clusters



# Subjects of densest Tweet clusters



# Drawback of HDBSCAN clusters





# Business interests vs. Public Welfare



[@Phil 4 Freedom](#)

It's funny that after admitting the hold up on **#CERB** was entirely about the oil industry and the carbon tax, conservative MPs & MPPs seem to have a burr in thier bum now that not all Canadians affected or otherwise, qualify for CERB The story changes daily [@Canpoli](#) [@Onpoli](#) [@ableg](#)

[@waffletothesean](#)

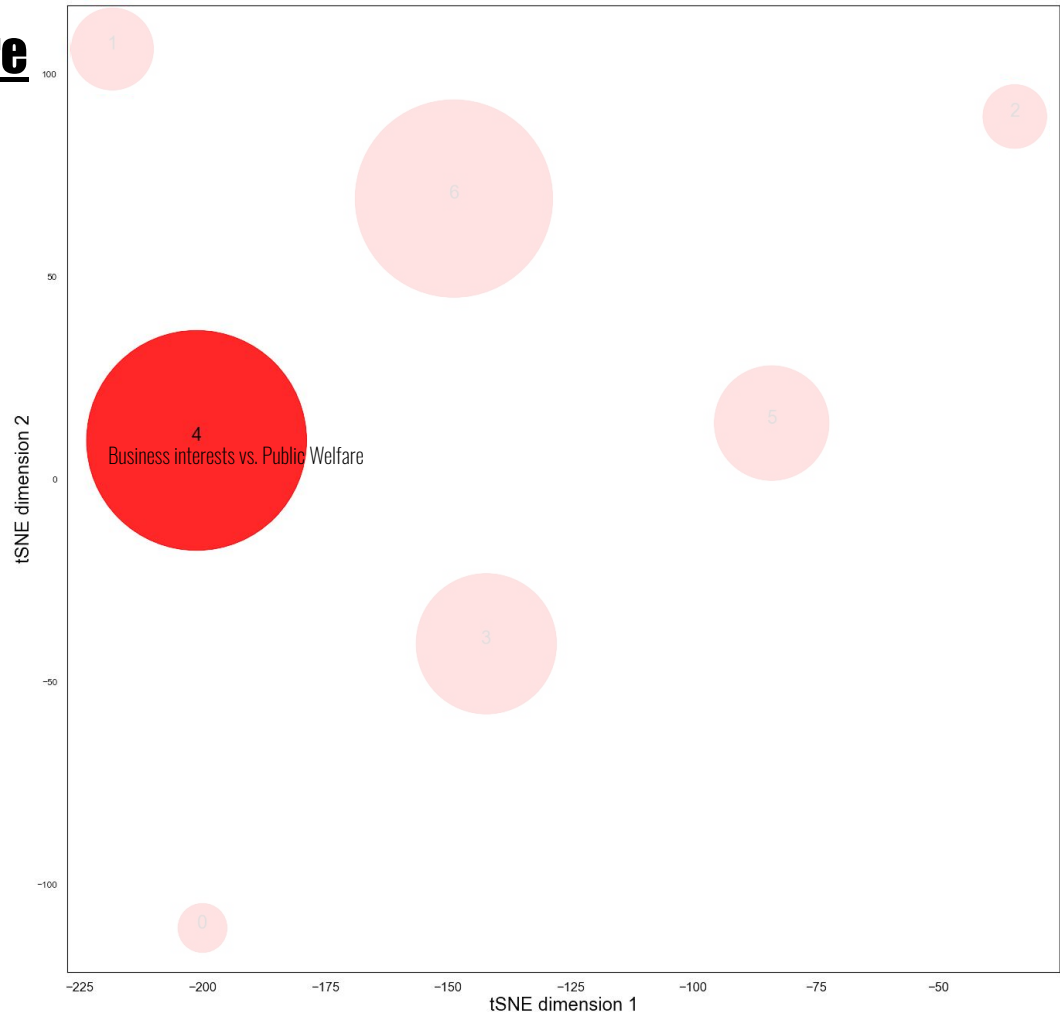
Replying to [@angryablib](#) [@PnPCBC](#) and [@theJagmeetSingh](#)

I don't think extending an existing program counts as voted for new aid. Interesting that when CEWS was 3x the budget of CERB, **Trudeau** was quick to double it for his **corporate buddies** over a month ago. But **unemployed people pinch pennies** waiting for him to extend the CERB 🙄

[@snowguy78](#)

Replying to [@policog](#)

We are at War, somehow the CPC can not equate **the cost of doing bussiness**, with what must be done to **ensure the well being of our citizens**. They are nothing but DF's. Polliver proposes transitional payments to wean us off CERB, simply increase minimum wages. TADA problem solved.



# CERB Fraud and Failures

[@Kirstie\\_Wils](#)

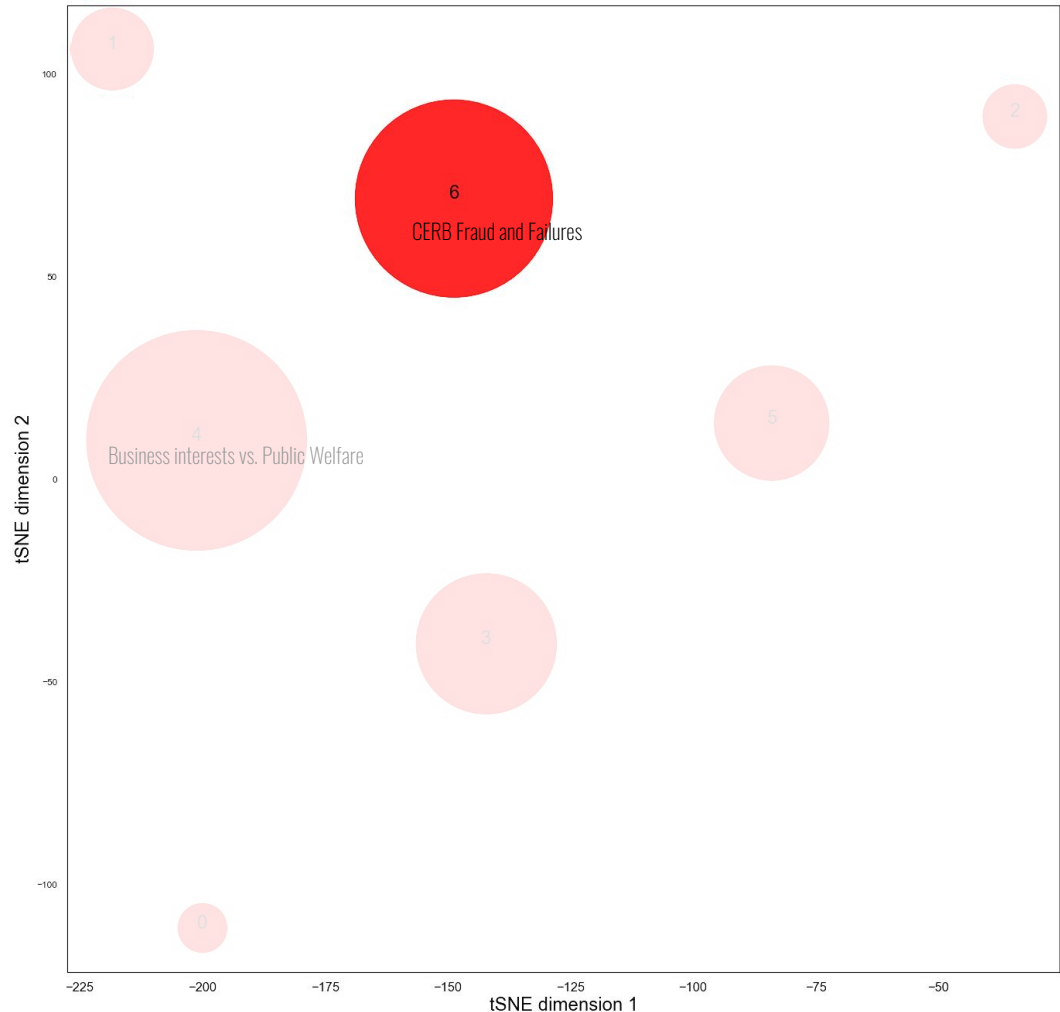
I lived 3 weeks without income coming in..now the CERB website is all fucked up & sending my boss & I more money than they should..& knowing damn well the Government will want it back when this is all over..SO if you got more than you should have, do NOT spend it [#CERB](#) [#COVID19ON](#)

[@Skyogurt](#)

Replying to [@Seawisp2](#) and [@CastanetNews](#)  
Just so you know, it's not that easy to get CERB and they do investigate each claim. Only reason I say this is because I've been dealing with CERB and Employment Insurance for months trying to get some government support while in a referred job training program.

[@MzmeriABCA](#)

So I just got a call from Revenue Canada looking for my son to verify his eligibility for CERB at the time. So I said to her maybe you should be tracking down those 830000 people who hadn't filed taxes or the fake SIN numbers. She actually laughed out loud & said there are trying



# Unequal Economic Impacts of COVID



[@fairwagesnow](#)

Women and low-wage, racialized workers in precarious employment are hit the hardest by COVID job losses. For these households, CERB was financial lifeline. With CERB ending, do you think the new EI program will be enough to live on? [#onlab](#) [#15andFairness](#)

[@WolfAndWyrn](#)

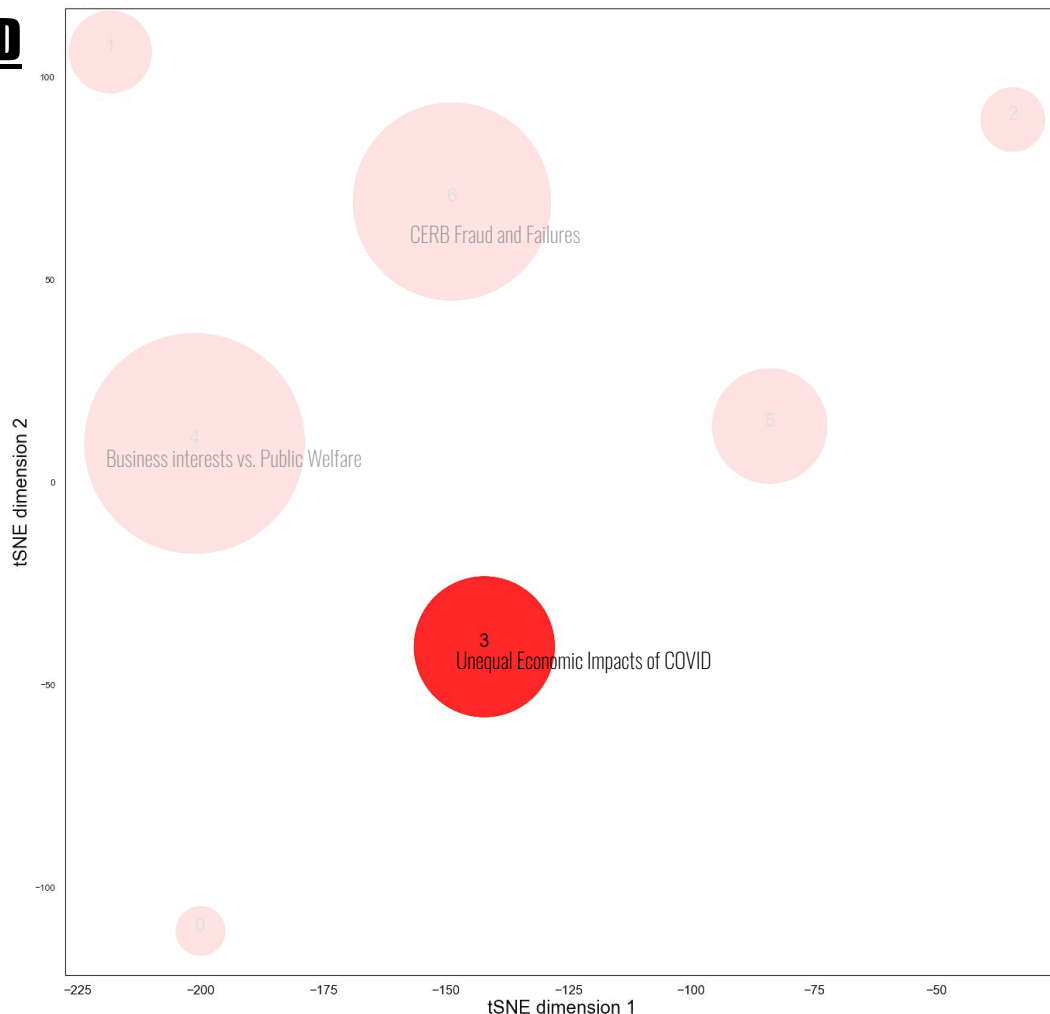
Canada's Covid Emergency Reponse Benefit program has ended, and Canadians on disability pensions still haven't seen the one time \$600 payment the government said they were authorizing back in June. Disability pensions pay HALF of what was deemed necessary for CERB. [@JustinTrudeau](#)

[@ronmortgageguy](#)

Replying to [@ewsiddall](#)

The fairest statement that could be made about Ontario RE right now is that the impact of the Covid crisis on real estate values here is unknown

Mortgage Deferral, CERB, CEWS and other government support programs have altered the normal outcomes of a massive economic catastrophe



# CERB as Wage Subsidy

[@DPChevalier](#)

[#CERB](#) [#cdnpoli](#) [#ableg](#)

Some CERB Recipients: I **make more on CERB than I do at my actual job**, it's nice being financially stable.

Businesses: So are you going to come back to work?

CERB Recipients: Sure, if you **pay me the value of my labour**.

Businesses:

[@AdvocatLyme](#)

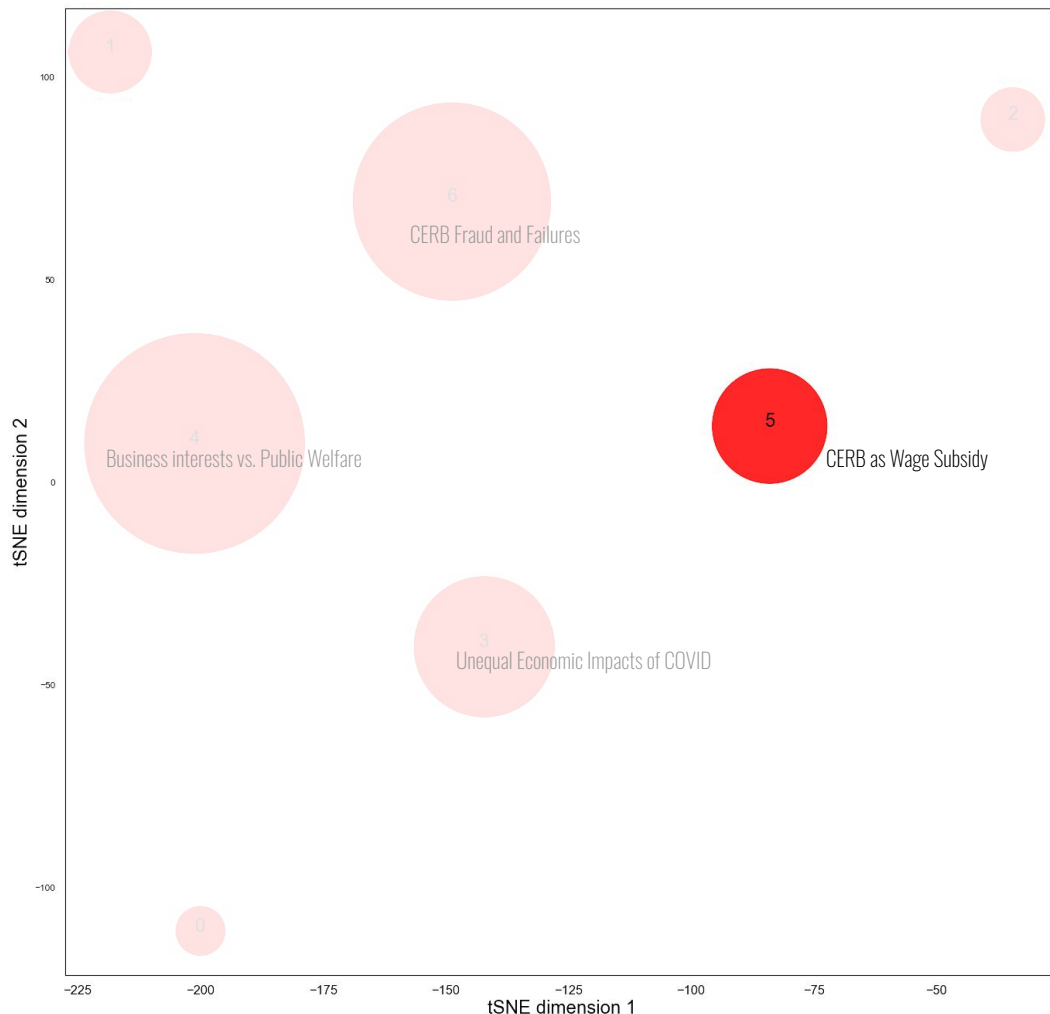
Replying to [@VassyKapelos](#)

Does the CERB drive the wrong behaviour in some cases? Will the CERB program be tweaked before extending 8 weeks? Students now have the option of **\$1900/month working 35 hrs/week or \$2000/month w CERB**. I told my 2 daughters, if you get a job, you work-but will others say the same?

[@tbarr0357](#)

Replying to [@faceless\\_vegan](#)

No one begrudges anyone for receiving CERB. What irks people is **when their job calls them back and they'd rather stay on CERB** My Son can't get bar workers to return to work because of CERB. I feel bad for your situation. Didn't CERB get extended to July We should stand together



# Financial Problems

[@CryptomineT](#)

For everyone wondering just called the [#cra](#) the official statement is 7-10 days to receive your [#cerb](#) so dont expect any money till the 9th of September as monday is a holiday [#cerb](#) but still [@JustinTrudeau](#) what's the reason I have to go a long weekend with **no food in my fridge?**

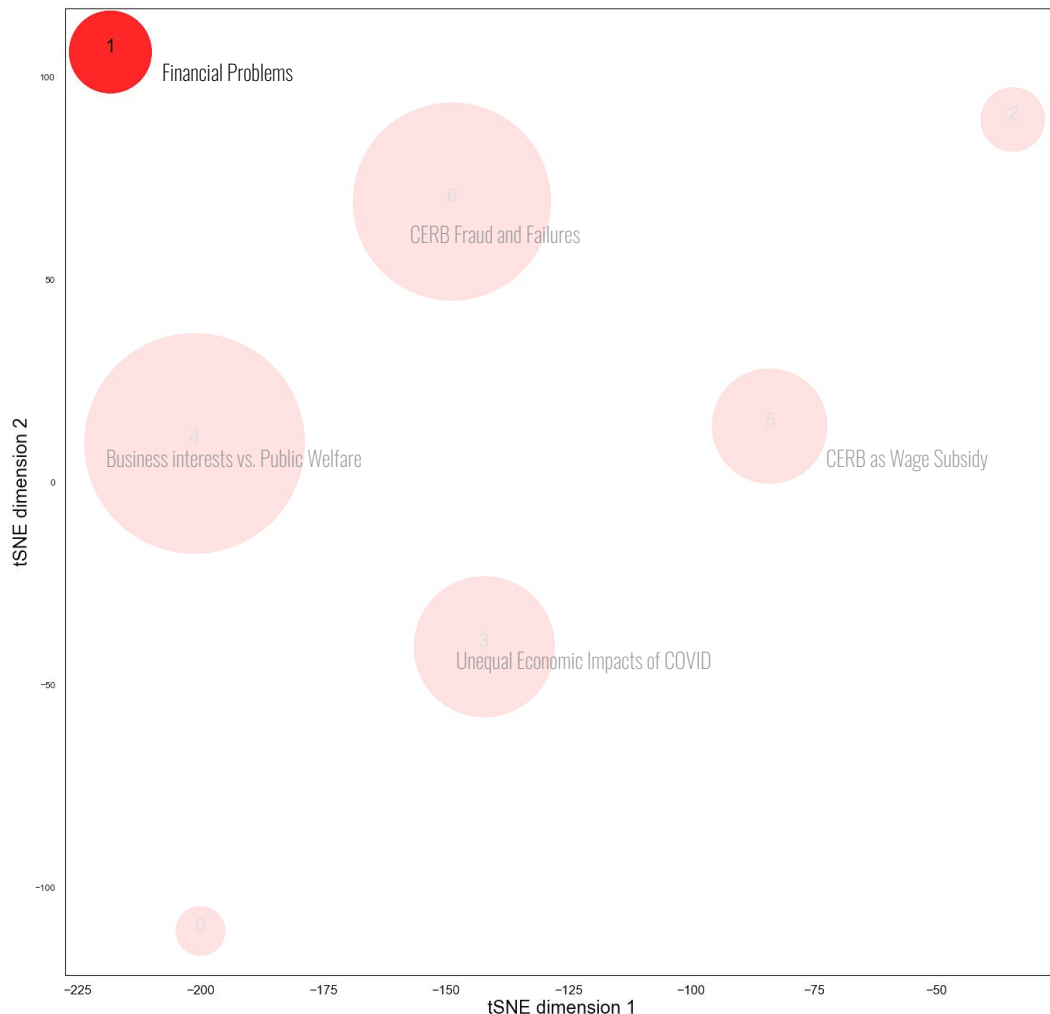
[@buttzfly](#)

Replying to [@CPHO\\_Canada](#)  
Having no money for Canada Day after cerb ran out and **no money for a month** can't even get Ontario works cause of cerb can't even get a coffee well I think I'm done with 2020 and life in general just gonna get stoned by neighbors pot n thin out this smr 🍓🍓

[@serennajodoinxo](#)

Replying to [@serennajodoinxo](#) and [@albertaseparate](#)

We get the cerb money and have to pay some back by tax year. And I'm fine with that as long as I have a roof over my head with food. Covid numbers are rising which means another shut down and **I'll lose everything if cerb isn't back.**



# Program Announcements



[@CroweMacKay](#)

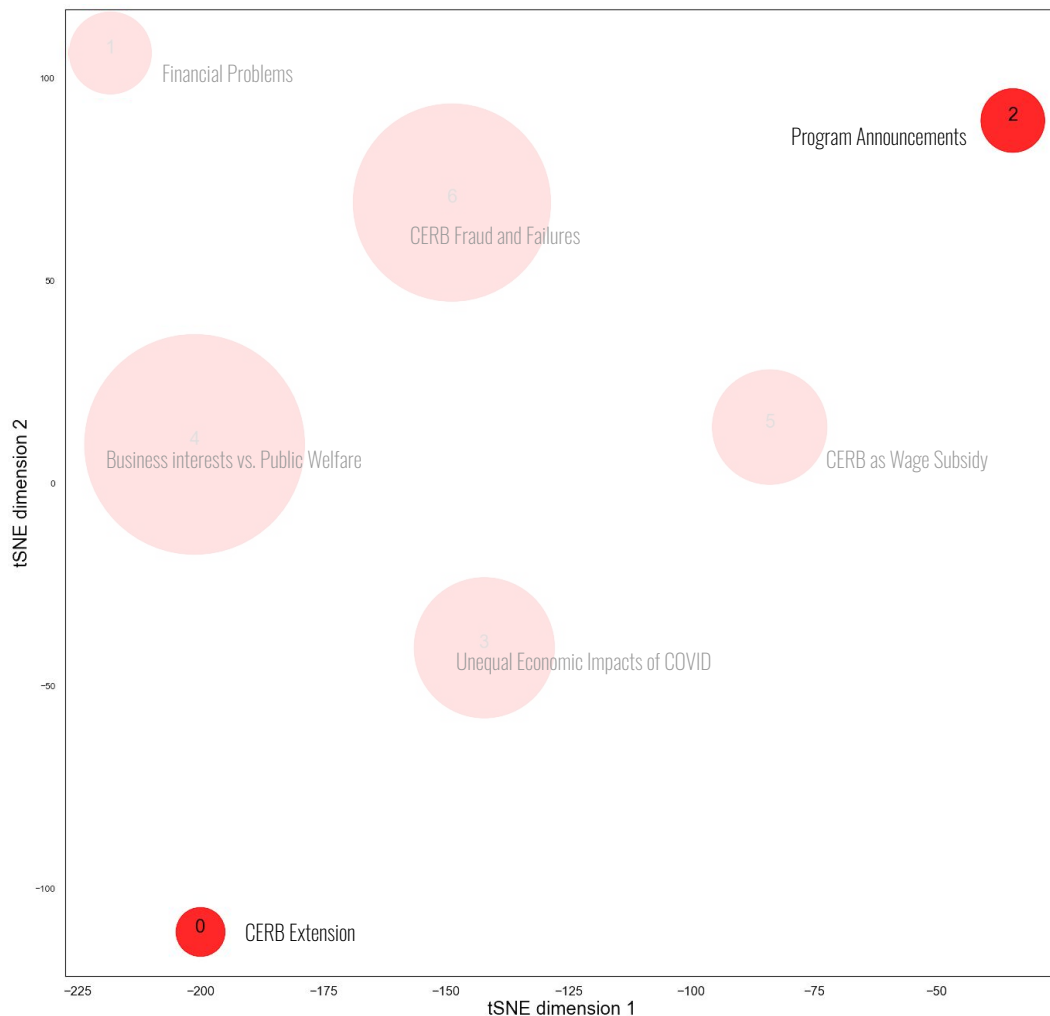
Today the Federal Government introduced the new Canada Emergency Response Benefit ("CERB"). CERB provides \$2000 per mth to those affected by COVID-19 for up to 4 months. Learn if you're eligible here: <https://bit.ly/392b33d>

## CERB Extension



[@brianne\\_gardner](#)

CERB EXTENTION\*\*\*On June 16, 2020, the government announced it will extend the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) for another 8 weeks to provide support for a total of 24 weeks, ending October 3, 2020.





# Takeaways

**1. CERB has a lot of public support**





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**1. CERB has a lot of public support**

**2. Critiques reflect program's indispensability, focus on **expansion** and improvements**

**3. Twitter conversations reflect Canada's political culture**

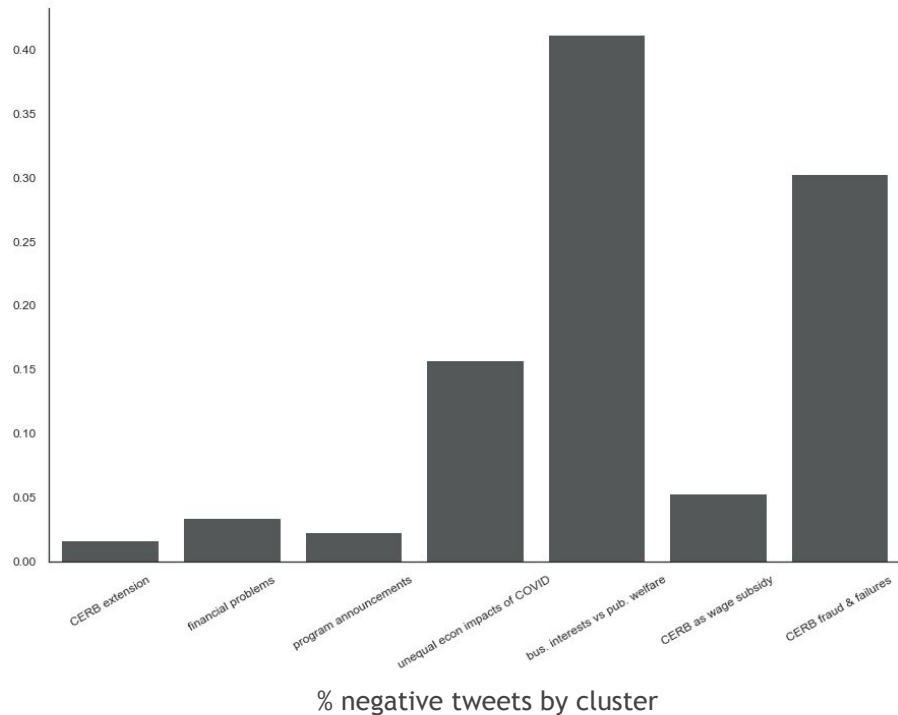
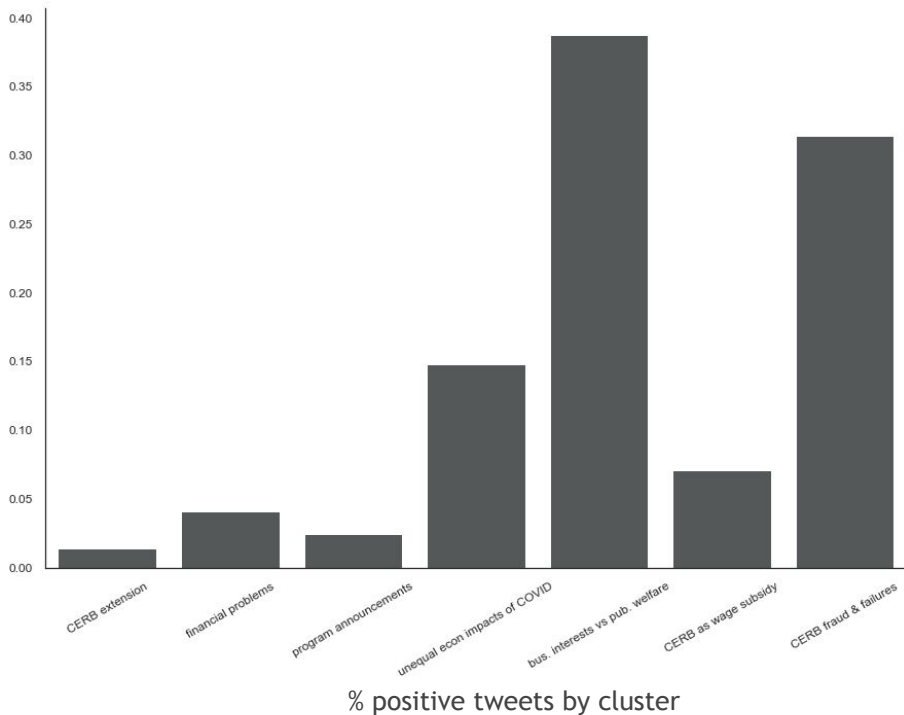
An aerial view of a city street intersection, likely in Vancouver, Canada, featuring a large, modern glass-walled building on the left and a large, dark, rectangular building on the right. The street is wide and has multiple lanes with traffic lights. In the background, a statue on a pedestal is visible. The sky is clear and blue. A large black rectangular box with the text 'Thank You' in white is centered over the street.

# Thank You

CBC  
NEWS

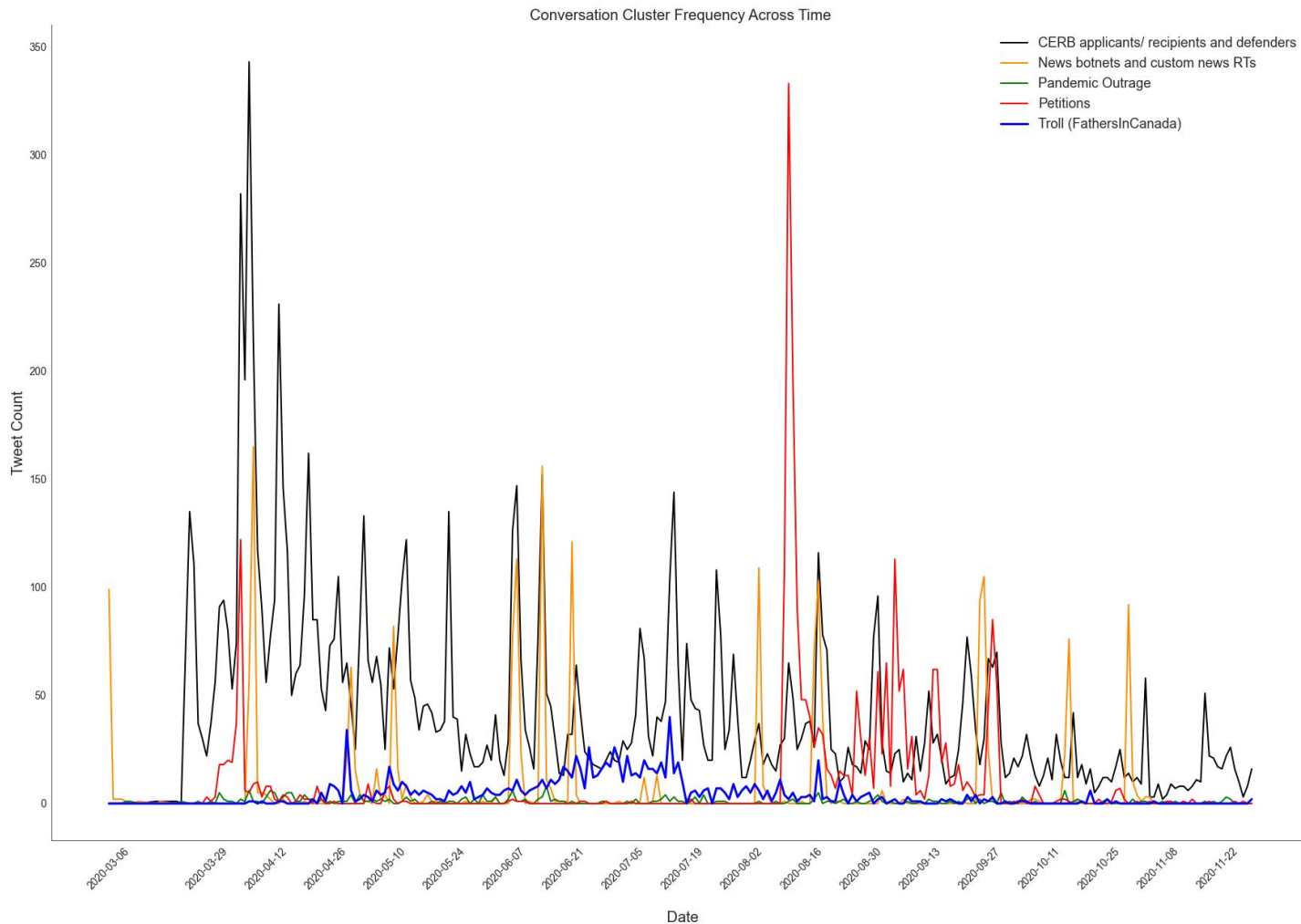
[amandajcheney.com](http://amandajcheney.com)  
[amanda.j.cheney@gmail.com](mailto:amanda.j.cheney@gmail.com)  
[linkedin.com/in/amandajcheney](https://www.linkedin.com/in/amandajcheney)  
[github.com/ajc356](https://github.com/ajc356)

# Clusters by Sentiment: Positive vs Negative Tweets



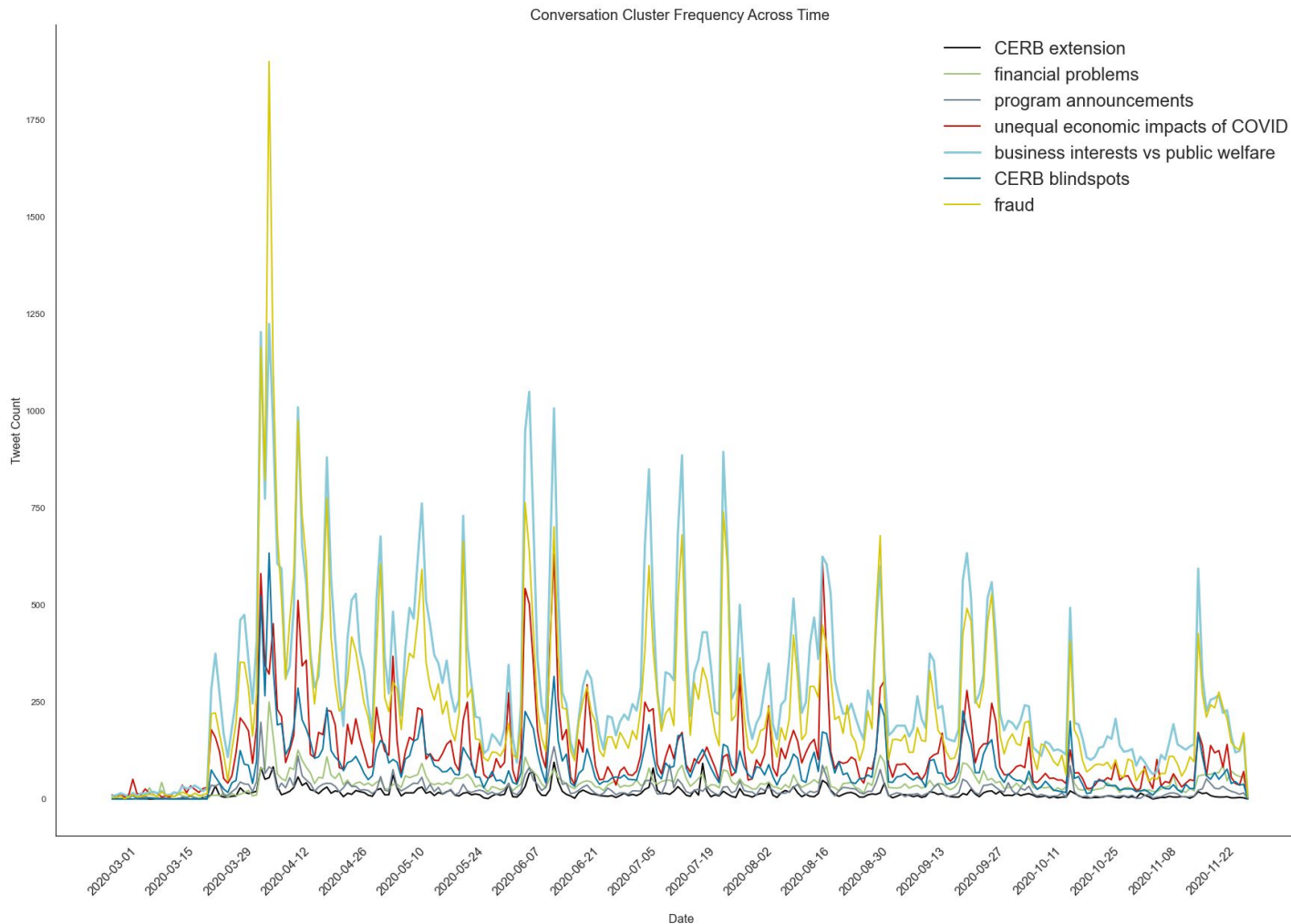
# Appendix:

## HDBSCAN Cluster Frequency across time



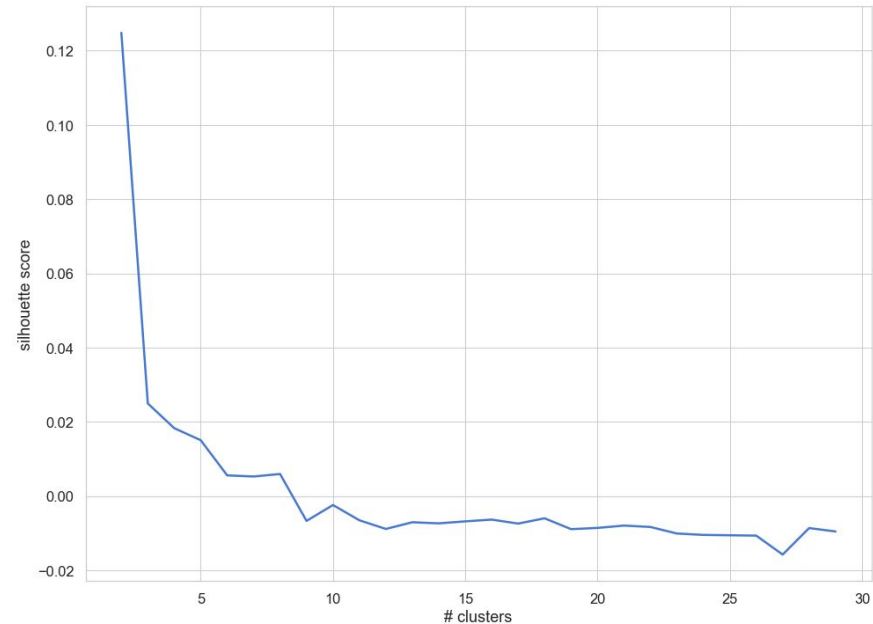
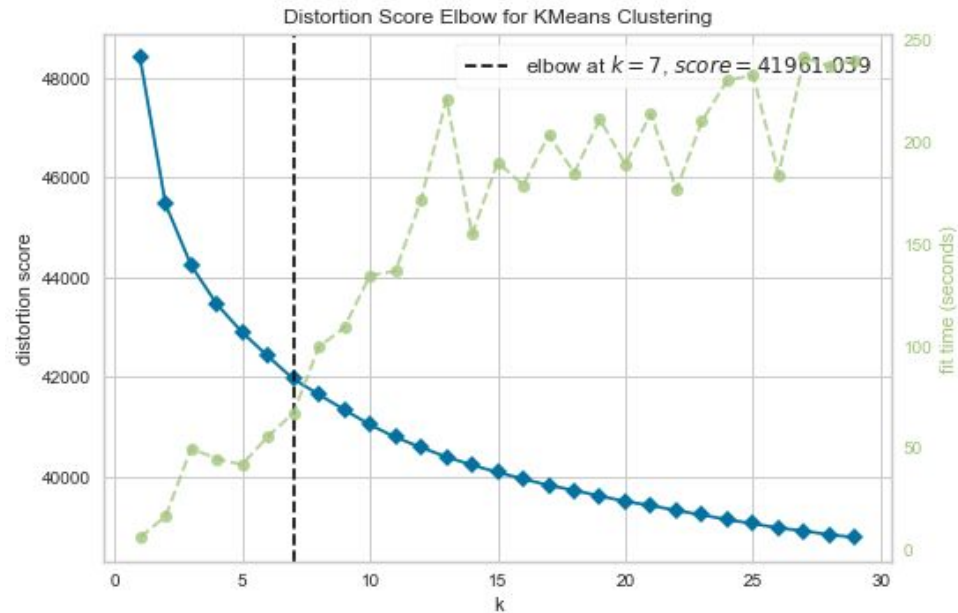
# Appendix:

## KMeans Cluster Frequency across time





# Appendix: Choosing 7 as optimal number of clusters



# Appendix: Query terms and filtering

```
snsrape --jsonl --max-results 2000000 --since 2020-03-01  
twitter-search '((CRB or #CRB) -clubes -coupe -SuperCoupe -SUPER_COUPE  
-football -belouizdad -chabab -USMA -brasileño -Brasileirão -Algérie  
-Railway -@IR_CRB -@RailMinIndia -@PiyushGoyal) OR CERB OR #CERB OR  
(#EI (Canada OR #onpoli OR #cdnpoli)) OR (Canada unemployment) OR  
((#CRA or cra) (#covid19canada OR #covid19relief OR covid OR covid19  
OR coronavirus or pandemic)) -filter:retweets' > cerb_no_retweets.json
```