Replication Memo

Nov 3, 2024

This paper addresses an interesting and timely topic. As radical right parties like the AfD break new ground in electoral support in Europe, understanding what events increase their support among the public is important. This paper specifically tests how various terrorist incidents affect the similarity of public rhetoric on Twitter to AfD rhetoric.

Unfortunately, I was not able to replicate the code sent to me. The shape file had a different name in the zip file from the Rscript and said that it was too large of a file for me to open in R. The code looks well-organized and I would assume that it would run if this problem were resolved.

Besides this, I have a few suggestions for improving the paper. From the abstract, it was not clear what “immigrants-related organizations” meant. Does this mean that the authors are also going to investigate something pertaining to immigrants rights groups in Germany as potentially increasing people’s sense of threat? I assume these groups are not carrying out terrorist attacks? This should be clarified because it is not currently clear.

In the main text of the paper, the authors seem focused on the results of one other paper. Is this meant as a research note or piece in a replication journal? If so, I think this focus is fine. If not, it would be great to see the authors expand the framing of their text to the broader topic introduced in the abstract. I know this is a draft, but it would be great to have a bit more explanation of what the very nice-looking figure shows and the broader implications (if going beyond a critique of the first paper). For possible areas of future direction, I wonder if the authors want to investigate the relationship (what I think is shown in the map) between how Twitter rhetoric changed following terrorist attacks and the next state, national, or EU election. Are the localities with higher lexical similarity to the AfD actually more likely to vote for the party?

Again, this paper seems like it has promise. I look forward to reading the next draft of the paper.