

What's on the Agenda?

Automated Text Classification for Political Text

Marius Sältzer

Our Agenda

1. Before we start

- a. First name basis?
- b. Self introduction
- c. Language
- d. This could be difficult

2. Organization

- a. How this course will work
- b. Studien/Prüfungsleistung
- c. Videos

3. Course Content / Some Motivation

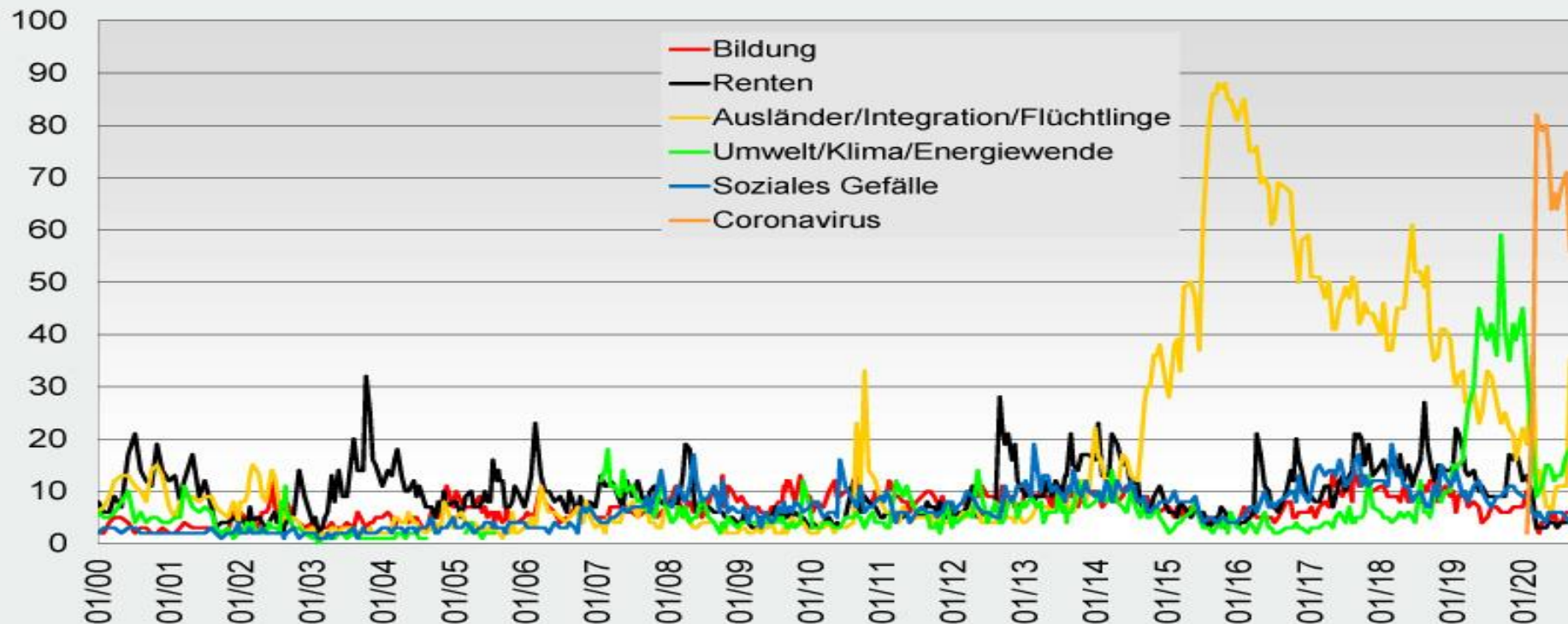
What is the substance of politics?

- Classic dichotomy:
 - Politics
 - Policy
 - Polity
- How is policy selected by politics in a given polity?
 - What substantive problems do societies face?
 - How are parties selecting what they emphasize?
 - How does media influence this choice?



Wichtige Probleme in Deutschland

seit 01/2000 (max. zwei Nennungen)



But how do parties and media interact?

- Questions of responsiveness
 - Are politicians responding to their voter's issue priorities?
 - Which groups are represented?
 - Do parties respond differently?
 - Example: **Migration Policy**
- Questions of Party competition
 - How do parties change emphasis?
 - How do they change position?
 - Do they react to each other?
 - Example: **Environmental Policy**
- Do media outlets differ in their emphasis?
- Do they react to events or are they “creating” them?

But how do we measure this?

- How can we know the “agenda” of
 - Voters?
 - Parties?
 - Newspapers?
- By “reading” their statements
 - Party manifesto
 - Campaign communication
 - Social Media

Text as Data

- Quantifying text
- In this course: categorizing it in policy areas
 - by hand (coding)
 - by giving the computer categories (supervised learning)
 - by letting the computer categorize the text (unsupervised learning)
- Based on terms that come up in it

Academic Research

- Public Opinion
- Party Competition
 - Valence Issues
 - Positional Issues
 - Saliency Theory
- Public Policy
 - Policy Cycle
 - Agenda Setting
 - Political Events
- Political Communication

Practical Use

- Programming
 - Learn a first programming language
 - Apply it to hot topics
- Basic Artificial Intelligence
 - Machine Learning
 - Unsupervised Learning
 - Understand algorithms
- See that it is not that complicated ;)

What areas are you interested in?

- Manifestos
- News Articles
- Social Media
- Other ideas?

Homework

Read the literature and answer the following questions:

- How do the authors understand “agenda”
- What implications does the absence of an issue on the agenda have?
- What defines an issue?

Look at this graphic: It shows the MIP in the UK.

Is COVID-19 a health issue or an economic issue?

What is the most important issue facing the country?

Which of the following do you think are the most important issues facing the country at this time? Please tick up to three. (% answers for 'health' 'the environment' 'the economy' and 'Britain leaving the EU' shown)

