

# Has liberalism lost ground against conservatism?

## Legitimacy of civil society in public media discourses in Austria

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Liberal values are increasingly under dispute. What role does civil society (CS) take within this broader development? By analyzing accounts on civil society in Austrian public media during an authoritarian shift, this paper investigates whether the legitimacy of liberal vs. conservative segments of CS changes. About 900,000 articles from ideologically diverse newspapers and the most influential television channel are evaluated using corpus linguistics methods. First analyses corroborate the presence of a conservative shift and an increasingly morally charged public discourse in Austria, however, unlike in Eastern European countries, this shift does not appear to be promoted from within CS.

### 1. Introduction

Lately, liberal culture has been repeatedly and profoundly questioned, and a **cultural backlash** (Norris & Inglehart, 2019) has been taking place: The liberal cultural regime with its strong focus on universal individual rights appears to be experiencing a decline, while conservative values are making a comeback. Conservative ideology emphasises the moral principles of loyalty, authority and sanctity (Graham et al., 2011, 2012a). These conservative principles can be observed in recent global shifts towards authoritarian forms of governance, the increasing demand for strong nation-states and strong leadership. This shift towards a more conservative zeitgeist has become **visible in Austria** in the national elections of 2017: The elected government displayed strong nationalist, authoritarian traits, thus being a prime example of the cultural backlash (Dimmel & Schmid, 2019; Wodak, 2018).

**Civil society** (CS) has a crucial role in the dispersion of moral values. CS enjoys high levels of trust and legitimacy, compared to political institutions and companies. In contrast to the latter, civil society organizations (CSOs) are not suspected to follow their own idiosyncratic interests, but on the contrary are devoted to the common good and idealistic goals (J. W. Meyer & Jepperson, 2000). However, the content of those **idealistic goals** varies greatly: **From liberal principles** of universal human rights **to more conservative goals** like the protection of traditional family structures or traditional culture. Nevertheless, as the concept of CS had been resumed in the 1980s around the struggles against the Soviet Union and authoritarian regimes in South America, it has been mostly imbued with liberal culture and demands for more democratic governance since then (Ehrenberg, 2017a).

Recent research indicates, however, that the cultural change towards conservative authoritarianism in Poland (Cipek & Lacković, 2019) and Hungary (Greskovits, 2020) emanated from CS. Moder & Pranzl (2019) hypothesize that **“capturing” CS to foster ideological change towards conservatism** might be not only the first warning signal for countries to become more authoritarian, but also a strong indicator for the robustness of this change. Although Austria is different from these former Soviet countries in that the institutional framework has a longer uninterrupted history, warning signs regarding Austria’s CS are visible as well: Repeated attacks on liberal and humanitarian civil society organizations (CSOs) led to the formation of a “solidarity pact”<sup>1</sup> between 87 CSOs to unitedly defend against the government.

Against this backdrop of ideological change, this paper investigates the **role of CS in Austrian mainstream media between 2006 and 2020**. I trace how liberal versus conservative CS is depicted, and estimate the legitimacy of those distinct segments of CS. Specifically, I examine whether the role of CS is changing in ways similar to the trends in Poland and Hungary: Have the liberal parts of CS lost legitimacy in mainstream public discourse, respectively, have the conservative parts gained ground? First analyses confirm the presence of a cultural shift towards conservatism in general. In general, liberal CS is depicted more negatively than conservative CS, but this does not appear to be a growing trend. These findings indicate that the cultural backlash in Austria, unlike in Poland and Hungary, is not centrally promoted by CS; that CS in Austria is more resilient and not that easily transformed, probably due to its longer history; and that the attacks against liberal CS did not cause lasting damage in terms of reduced legitimacy in mainstream public discourse.

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1. Epistemological foundations

The research questions are approached through a constructivist lens. The social construction of reality is seen as mediated through modes of representation like public discourses. These discourses are not mere representations of a world of facticity, they are not transparent lenses through which reality can be gleaned. Rather, these discourses define and produce our reality (Hall, 1997; Shapiro, 1989). For the context of this paper, this implies that CS does not exist in a world outside of discourse, but that CS exists only through its multiple

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<sup>1</sup> <https://solidaritaetspakt.org/>, last accessed 15.09.2020.

discursive representations in public media, social media, literature, day-to-day-conversations, legislature and so forth (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014: ch.3).

## 2.2. Definition CS

The **normative** notion of CS emerges with the dawn of modernity: In the writings of John Locke, Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rosseau, civil liberties emerged as an idea that is clearly distinct from the role individuals played in medieval societies. Individuals are ever since conceived of as actors that claim political and economic rights (at the beginning, against aristocracy and the church) (Ehrenberg, 2017b). Already from Locke and Hobbes on, the concept of CS is used in very different ways and frameworks. Today, CS solves governance problems around public services, encourages mutual trust, counters deficiencies of democracy, represents counter-hegemonic forces or serves as the protective belt of the elite (Fowler & Biekart, 2011; Glasius, 2010; Munck, 2002). In that sense, the term CS is, as the notion of democracy, an empty signifier (Canovan, 1999; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985) – an utopian promise of a world with equal distribution of power, a world whose problems are solved because every collective has the full sovereignty to deal with all societal, political, economical issues efficiently. A promise that will never be fulfilled, but serves as a necessary guide in an ever-complex world.

A common denominator of (most) normative definitions of CS is an intent to serve the public good, and to this in a coordinated fashion. This minimal common ground is captured in the concept of **civic activity** (Lichterhan & Eliasoph, 2014: 809):

- *“Participants co-ordinate interaction around a mission of improving [/restoring] common life, however they define “improving” and “common.”*
- *Participants coordinate their ongoing interaction together, expecting if not always attaining some flexibility in coordinating interaction rather than imagining their action as mainly being predetermined by pre-existing rules and roles.*
- *Participants implicitly act as members of a larger, imagined society—however they are imagining it—to whom their problem solving can appeal.”*

This definition abstracts from the specific ideas of *how* common life should be improved, encompassing very different, even **opposing ideological stances**. The second part of the definition highlights the emancipatory component of civiness: Playing by established **rules of the game** is not enough for an action to be qualified as civic activity, although this action may be taken out of considerations for the common good. Prohibition of murder, e.g.,

is part of the legal system in Austria – hence refraining from homicide is expected from everyone, also out of self-interest of not going to jail, and thus does not qualify as genuine civic activity.

Aside the normative perspectives, another strand of research defines CS negatively, i.e. as **forms of organization** neither belonging to the realms of public administration nor private business (Ehrenberg, 2017b; Etzioni, 1973). This definition lends itself more naturally to empirical operationalization, and is thus dominant in comparative research (Appe, 2019; Salamon & Anheier, 1992).

The **two definitions of CS are not commensurable** with each other. The normative view is mostly independent of (permanent) organizational forms - spontaneous social movements, informal groups, and individuals' behavioural traits (such as helping a stranger out on the street) blend in the normative perspectives. The organizational perspective cannot be converted to the normative view either (Evers, 2013): Organized civil society (CSOs) is known to engage in rent-seeking activities (Olson, 2009). Individuals active in CSOs and other forms of (formal) volunteering usually have high capital endowments in the Bourdieuan sense, thus the possibilities for rent-seeking are unevenly distributed (Rameder, 2015). The mere underrepresentation of under-privileged groups in CSOs is likely to intensify existing societal cleavages (Reich, 2016). Some CSOs explicitly aim at undermining representative democracies and the universalist values those are founded on. Chambers and Kopstein (2001) introduced the term “**bad civil society**” for organizations advocating hate, bigotry, aggressive xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism, and list ample examples of CSOs of this form. Berman (1997) and Sabetti (1996) document the key role of CSOs in building fascist regimes in the interwar period.

This paper aims to empirically capture the discursive representation of CS in public media in all its breadth. Therefore, I combine the organizational level and the normative perspective, and identify CSOs (e.g. “association”, “NGO”) as well as civic activities (“demonstration”, “petition”) in public media accounts.

### 2.3. Cultural backlash and moral foundations theory

The recent rise of populist forces, and the simultaneous decline of confidence in liberal democratic institutions, have been a much debated issue. It started with general debates about the **eroding** of the cores of **western democracies** and declining interest in public affairs (Crouch, 2004; Putnam, 2000). Furthermore, the political establishments of western

democracies were set in turmoil by left as well as right wing populist forces (Laclau, 2005; Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012). Those trends seemed to be fueled by the financial crisis of 2008, and culminated in Brexit and the election of Donald Trump - taking place in the UK and US, the countries that pride themselves to be the cradles of modern liberal democracy (Norris & Inglehart, 2019).

There are different explanations for these trends: One line of argument sees the main reason for the destabilization of the establishment in growing **economic grievances** (Eichengreen, 2018; Rodrik, 2018). Others regard the rise of the populists as endogenous phenomena to the setup of western democracies themselves, which by construction have to deal with these inbuilt tensions (Blühdorn & Butzlaff, 2019; Canovan, 1999). A third line of thought traces out grievances on an ideational level, arguing that **cultural pluralism threatens the identities** of the white majority populations (Fukuyama, 2018; Goodhart, 2017). Norris & Inglehart (2019) put elements of those explanations together in a unified framework: The silent revolution in the 1960s and 1970s towards liberal values, fueled by increasing access to education, urbanization, and post-WWII economic growth— up to the inflection point where liberals are suddenly the majority. The former majority, white males without higher education, mostly in rural areas, are suddenly not the hegemonic group any more. Aggravated by growing economic insecurities und rising inequalities, this creates feelings of being left-behind, of unresolved societal promises (Hentges et al., 2003).

Most importantly, Norris & Inglehart (2019) observe that in addition to the populist surface rhetoric (“the people” against “the elite”), a core of authoritarian attitudes is latently present. The authors empirically demonstrate how the cleavage between socially liberal and **authoritarian values** has become a significant explanatory factor of voting behaviour in Europe and the US, much more than the traditional left-right distinction. The empirical operationalization of Norris' & Inglehart's (2019) concept of authoritarian values rests on moral foundations theory.

**Moral foundations theory** (MFT) is a recent approach emanatory from psychology explaining the nature of moral judgements (Graham et al., 2011, 2012b, 2013). Evolutionary biology is seen as a crucial factor, but not in the way of a single dimensional development like in Piaget's theories. Instead, evolutionary forces cause a **plurality of moral dimensions** to exist hardwired in the human brain prior to any experience, one dimension for every common social challenge. Those hardwired dimensions are later on shaped by experience, and are hence subject to cultural and societal factors. Furthermore, MFT rests on the assumption that

moral judgments are based on intuition, compared to rational reasoning. Rational reasoning over morals is seen as mainly a social practice to defend one's actions, barely as a reflection and manipulation of existing judgements. Hence, and important to highlight in the context of this paper, the adherence to different moral dimensions is mostly stable over an individual's life course, and moral values are not negotiable by rational reasoning.

MFT posits five<sup>2</sup> dimensions to which human moral judgements can be projected (Graham et al., 2013):

- 1) Care/harm
- 2) Fairness/cheating
- 3) Loyalty/betrayal
- 4) Authority/subversion
- 5) Sanctity/degradation

Individuals holding predominantly **liberal societal values** place a high value on the first two dimensions. In other words, for liberals, the primary criterion when judging societal issues is how much suffering there is (care) and how this suffering is distributed (fairness). Individuals with **authoritarian values - or conservative values**, in Graham et al.'s (2012b) original formulation – put comparably greater weight on the last three dimensions. Harm and fairness matter for conservatives' value judgement as well, but only next to questions of whether benefits accrue to the own group compared to other groups (loyalty), respect for established social hierarchies is maintained (authority), and physical purity is sustained (sanctity).

Care/harm and fairness/cheating, the first two dimensions, are universal values, in that their application is not directly related to the social group one belongs to. The conservative dimensions, on the other hand, exist in relation to the specific group one can be loyal to, to a specific hierarchy that can be adhered to, and a specific body that needs to be kept pure. This illustrates that conservative moral judgements are different from the universal moral judgements that became important with enlightenment philosophy.

#### 2.4. Civil society and the democratic state

Given the conceptual ambiguity around CS as outlined in section 2.2, and the multitude of perspectives on the democratic state (from states as rational actors, benevolent

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<sup>2</sup> In later writings, a sixth dimension „liberty and oppression“ was introduced. There are also other candidates for additional dimensions. For the state of the art, see <https://moralfoundations.org/>, last accessed 17.09.2020.

dictators, a mirror of the social struggles within society and so forth), it is not surprising that also the relationship between CS and the state is overdetermined (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014: ch. 3). Within the **CS in support of the state** perspective (Chambers & Kopstein, 2008), CS, the democratic state and a capitalist economy are mutually dependent and re-enforcing each other (De Tocqueville, 2015; Putnam et al., 1994). The networks of cooperation established through CS build up social capital and generalized trust, as well as the behaviors and attitudes required from citizens in a democratically governed state. The stability and civic liberties guaranteed by the state are, in return, crucial for civic life to flourish.

Another perspective, focusing on **CS in partnership with the state** (Chambers & Kopstein, 2008), is provided by social origins theory (Salamon & Anheier, 1998). Within this framework, it is duly acknowledged that modern nation-states and CS evolved simultaneously during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, thus are closely interdependent. The societal struggles of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century lead to the establishment of certain institutions of public welfare and social security in (almost) all western countries. The organizational locus of those institutions differs, though, as in some countries this welfare is provided by the state, in others by CS, or, as is often the case in Austria, in close collaboration between the state and CS (Pennerstorfer et al., 2013).

Reflections on a **CS against the state** become prominent with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, as mentioned above (Chambers & Kopstein, 2008). Today it is mainly the social movements literature that theorizes on an (inter alia) antagonistic relationship between CS and *democratic* states (Graeber, 2015; Rupnik, 2007): As the level of bureaucracy in public administration increases, the participatory aspects of democracy are neglected and CS gets marginalized. This can lead to citizens' withdrawal from politics altogether, as well as to protests and populist politics. If the balance does not shift more towards the participatory end again, CS - as well as the core democratic institutions- remain weak and unstable (Canovan, 1999).

However, the **balance** between **technocratic** governance and **participatory** elements can also shift in the opposite direction: If democratic institutions are too weak, as Molnár (2016) argues was the case in Eastern European countries after the fall of the Soviet Union, and CS is too strong, social polarization and authoritarian governance by the majority might result. This narrative fits to Italy (Sabetti, 1996) and Germany (Berman, 1997) in the interwar period, as well as to recent developments in Poland (Cipek & Lacković, 2019) and Hungary

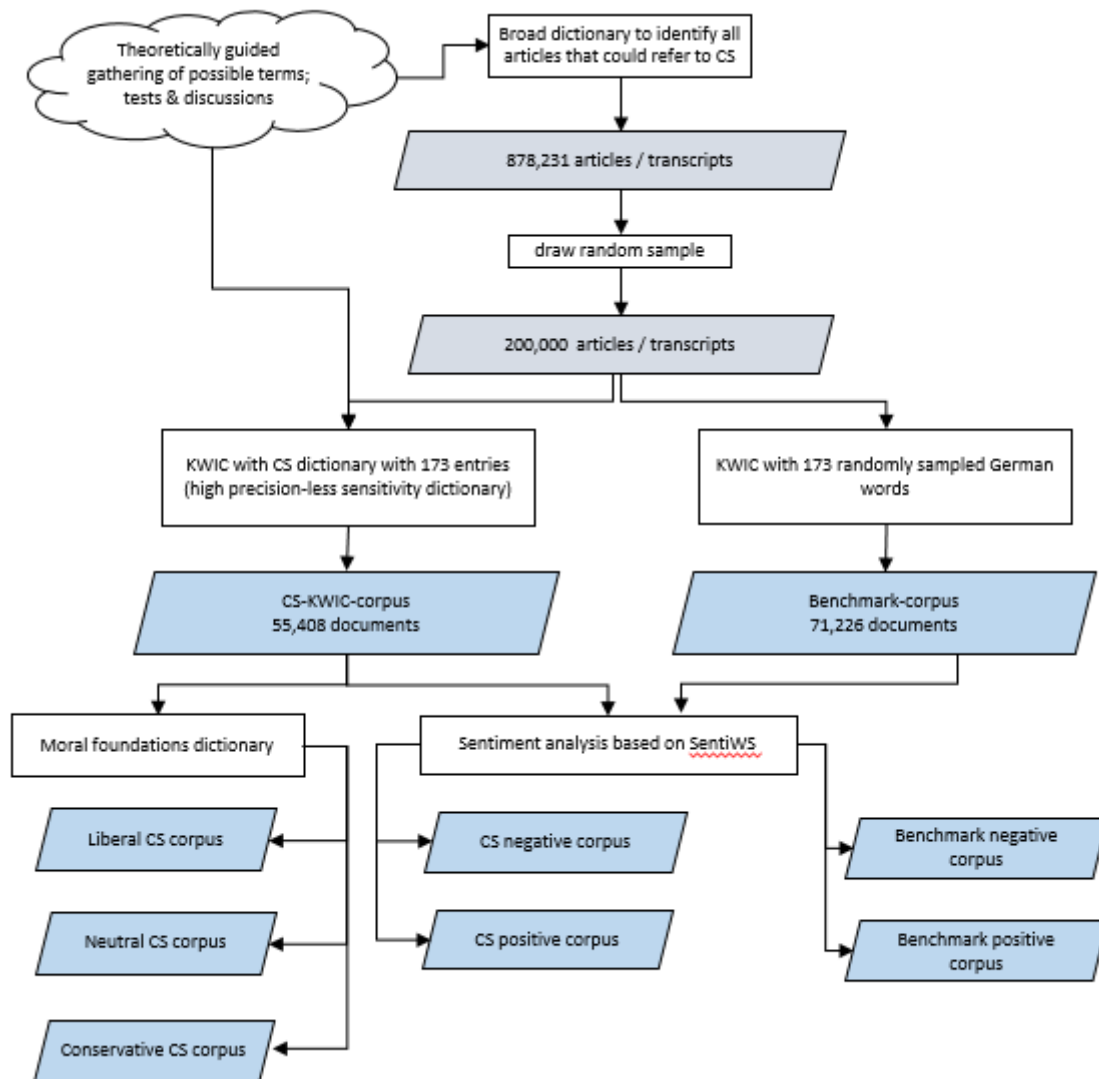
(Greskovits, 2020). In a milder form, weak democratic institutions vis a vis a strong CS might also result in plutocratic constellations like Reich (2018) is diagnosing for the present-day US.

To take account of the different possible constellations between the state and CS, I will draw on Gramsci's writings to distinguish between the hegemonic versus the counter-hegemonic CS (Buttigieg, 1995; Gramsci, 2006; Katz, 2006). The **hegemonic** segment of CS tries to maintain the dominant paradigm within society, thus upholding existing social conditions. As set out above in section 2.3, this agreement to the current social hierarchies is characteristic for **conservative** ideology. Counter-hegemonic CS, on the other hand, is the space where deprivation is organized and articulated to alter society. As the concept of deprivation presupposes references to the universal principles of care and fairness – the liberal foundations - **counter-hegemonic** protest is usually articulated in the **liberal** segment of CS. In between those two poles lies the majority of Austrian CSOs, which display both conservative and liberal elements. To some degree, those are part of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic projects.



### 3. Data and methodology

Figure 1: Flow-Chart of construction of (sub-)corpora



To answer the above stated research questions, public media accounts on CS, published in Austria between 2005 and 2020, are analysed with methods from corpus linguistics. To avoid potential biases and achieve a representative sample (Earl et al., 2004), the accounts are taken from ideologically diverse media outlets: Kronen Zeitung, Die Presse, Der Kurier, Der Standard, and ORF. They range from liberal to conservative social values, and liberal to social democratic economic policy orientation. Together, those outlets cover the majority of the Austrian population.<sup>3</sup> To identify the relevant articles (or transcripts, in the case of the national public service broadcaster ORF), the database of the Austrian Press

<sup>3</sup> Mediaanalyse: <https://www.media-analyse.at/table/3349>, last accessed 03.04.2020.

Agency (APA) is searched for words relating to CS on the organizational level as well civic activities.

The search query is constructed by building a dictionary (Zhai & Massung, 2016: 301) of synonyms for CSOs (e.g. *Verein*, *Gemeinnützige Stiftung*, *NGO*) as well as civic activities (e.g. *Demonstration*, *Protest*, *öffentliche Versammlung*) in Austria. As both the organizational forms as well as typical civic activities are highly specific to the national culture (see social origins theory in sec. 2.4, as well as Meyer et al., (2019)), there exists no internationally comparable blueprint. The dictionary was built by assembling (a) synonyms for the legal forms CSOs assume in Austria, (Pennerstorfer et al., 2013), (b) synonyms for all functional types of CSOs based on the International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations (Litofcenko et al., 2020; Salamon & Anheier, 1992, 1996), (c) assembling a list of common civic activities from the literature on collective action (McAdam et al., 2005), (d) displayed strategies of publicly visible organizations like Greenpeace or Unions, and (e) agentic subject forms of the otherwise assembled terms. For getting the sample out of the database, the highest possible sensitivity<sup>4</sup> was desired, thus also terms with a substantive false-positive rate were included. The sample achieved with this procedure includes about 900,000 articles, approximately uniformly distributed over media outlets and time.

Out of this sample of ~900,000 articles, a random sample of  $n=200,000$  was taken as not to unnecessarily waste computational resources. Then, a smaller corpus was sliced out. This corpus is meant to solely depict the discourse about CS in Austria, and not to be stained with fragments of other discourses as well. I.e. a high precision was the main goal, whereas the sensitivity was secondary. To achieve this, a keyword-in-context (KWIC) analysis with different window sizes was performed on a narrowed down dictionary (high precision-less sensitivity dictionary). This second dictionary included only words that unambiguously refer to CSOs or civic activities, such that the false-positive-rate is kept at the minimum level. Words like *Bürger* or *Museum*, which would sample many true-positive but also false-positive entries, were excluded, because the damage done to the representativity of the analysis by including too many false-positives was considered higher than the damage of not including every facet of CS. It is assumed that the exclusion did not invoke certain ideological biases to the representativity of the sample, as the sheer number of entries included in the final

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<sup>4</sup> Precision=TP/(TP+FP); Sensitivity=TP/(TP+FN); TP=true positive, FN=false negative, FP=false positive.

dictionary should lead to a cancelling-out-effect of the biases of the individual entries (173, for the full dictionary, see Figure 12).

A KWIC analysis looks at the text  $\pm x$  words around certain keywords, where  $x$  is any natural number specifying the window size (Mautner, 2016; Silverman, 2015). The keywords in this particular case are the terms included in the narrowed down CS-dictionary with 173 entries (i.e. the high precision - less sensitivity dictionary). The window size was varied to check for the robustness of results, with  $x \in \{10, 30, 100\}$ . An example of the CS-KWIC-corpus is depicted in Figure 2.

Figure 2: KWIC-window with  $x=100$ , keyword bold in the second column

Land seine Versprechen nicht einhält ", erklärte Wagner-Hager . " A	<b>Hilfsorganisationen</b>	dominiert scharfe Kritik am Sparkurs . Annelies
1956 beginnt der Aufstand in Budapest gegen das sowjetische Regim	<b>Hilfsorganisationen</b>	, Gemeinden und Land Burgenland Beispiellose
Mantel des Schweigens " ### Aus Angst vor Rassismusvorwürfen lie	<b>Hilfsorganisationen</b>	und Strafverfolger vor dem Vorwurf des Rassism
humanitärer Einsätze ( Anm . : Die Tsunami-Katastrophe im Dezemb	<b>Hilfsorganisationen</b>	, die überlebensnotwendiges Wasser bringen u
Einsatzteams aus der ganzen Welt eingetroffen , wir haben heute ei	<b>Hilfsorganisationen</b>	, die im Moment vor Ort sind , gut miteinander l
: 00 ( 17 : 00 ) - Hilfsorganisationen protestieren gegen Sparkürzunge	<b>Hilfsorganisationen</b>	gleich neben Bundeskanzleramt und Außenmin
Krems-Gneixendorf : " , Skoro ubegu ' - , Bald werde ich fliehen ' , er	<b>Hilfsorganisationen</b>	wie dem Internationalen Roten Kreuz . Erstens ,
EU-Geld direkt an Palästinenser Finanzhilfe aus Brüssel ohne Umwe	<b>Hilfsorganisationen</b>	überwiesen . Auch die Direktzahlungen an die F
den Vorteil , dass sich Menschen weniger ins Gesicht greifen . Die V	<b>Hilfsorganisationen</b>	" , schreibt WKO-Generalsekretär Karlheinz Kop

The CS-KWIC-corpus includes 55,408 documents, implying that within the 200,000 randomly samples original articles, 55,408 instances of discursive representation of CS where identified based on surface features of the text. As a benchmark against which to compare the discourse about CS, a second corpus based on a KWIC of 173 randomly sampled German words as keywords was constructed out of the sampled 200,000 articles. This benchmark - corpus was pruned to  $n=71,226^5$  such that the number of documents was roughly comparable to the number of documents in the CS-KWIC-corpus.

To identify the **liberal** versus **conservative segments of Austrian CS**, the CS-KWIC-corpus was analysed with a German translation of the moral foundations dictionary as created by Graham/ Haidt<sup>6</sup>. The English moral foundations dictionary is well-corroborated for the US and an increasing number of other countries to be able to distinguish liberal from conservative value orientation in automated text analysis (Graham et al., 2011, 2012a; Vaisey & Miles, 2014). The German translation was validated using a dataset of tweets from German politicians.

<sup>5</sup> The number of documents in the benchmark corpus is higher as 173 randomly sampled keywords occur more often in the corpus than the 173 CS-keywords.

<sup>6</sup> Obtained from <https://moralfoundations.org/other-materials/>, last accessed 02.02.2020.

The moral foundations dictionary relates occurrences of terms to the five moral foundations, respectively. Thus, there is an index that counts the number of occurrence of words relating to the e.g. care/harm dimension in the text, resulting in  $n(\text{moral\_foundation}) \in [0,1,2,3 \dots \infty]$ . The higher the number, the stronger does the text relate to this moral dimension. From those five indices, a composite moral foundations index (MFI) is created:

$$MFI = \frac{n(\text{care/harm})+n(\text{fairness/cheating})+10}{n(\text{loyalty/betrayal})+n(\text{authority/subversion})+n(\text{sanctity/degradation})+10}$$

The MFI is constructed in a way that values  $<1$  signify a predominant conservative moral orientation, whereas values  $>1$  signify a predominantly liberal value orientation. A second composite index, morality overall (M, sums up the numbers of all the individual dimensions to identify how much the texts are morally charged overall, regardless of the specific dimension:

$$MO = n(\text{care/harm})+n(\text{fairness/cheating})+n(\text{loyalty/betrayal})+n(\text{authority/subversion})+n(\text{sanctity/degradation})$$

Building on the MFI, the liberal versus conservative segments of civil society are identified as the 5% most liberal - or conservative, respectively - documents in the CS-KWIC-corpus. The empirical percentile  $p=0.95$  -or 0.05, respectively - of the MFI is chosen as cut-off point.

To empirically estimate the legitimacy that accrues to CS or particular segments of CS, a sentiment analysis is performed over the CS-KWIC as well as the benchmark-corpus. The sentiment dictionary is achieved from the Leipzig Corpora Collection (Remus et al., 2010). This dictionary assigns words to negative versus positive sentiments. An example of the underlying information is given in the following table:

Term  Word type	Sentiment	Inflections
erfüllen VVINF	0.0040	erfüllten,erfüllest,erfüllte,erfüllst,erfüllet,erfülltet,erfülle...
erleuchten VVINF	0.0040	erleuchte,erleuchtest,erleuchtet,erleuchtete,erleuchtetest,erleuchteten...
niedlich ADJX	0.0987	niedlicherer,niedlicheres,niedlichsten,niedlicherem, ...
optimal ADJX	0.2162	optimale,optimalem,optimalen,optimaler,optimales,optimalere, ...
blauäugig ADJX	-0.0445	blauäugigere,blauäugigstem,blauäugiger,blauäugigeren,blauäugigem...
beängstigend ADJX	-0.0367	beängstigende,beängstigendem,beängstigenden, ...

A sentiment value for the whole document is computed as the mean value over the words' sentiments. The positive and negative sub-corpora are selected by grouping the documents with the 10% highest, respectively lowest, values in the sentiment score together.

All analysis were conducted with different sizes of KWIC-windows (i.e. 10, 30, 100), and only relations and trends that are robust over all three specifications are discussed in the following section. The tables and figures displayed in the Appendix are based on the specification with window size 30.

#### 4. (Preliminary) results

Compared to the benchmark corpus, CS overall is depicted more negative (see Figure 3). This **negative connotation** is mainly driven by liberal CS, as Figure 4 shows: Liberal CS has on average an 0.075 lower sentiment score than the other parts of CS, which are only slightly more negatively signified than the benchmark sample. This difference of 0.075 is substantive, as the standard deviation of the sentiment score is 0.139. **Liberal CS** is the part of CS that is associated with demonstrations, activism, as well as charity and peace organizations (see Figure 5 and Figure 7). “Demonstrations” and “activism” indicate that this part of civil society represents the **counter-hegemonic** part of CS. But the liberal sector has another dimension, connected to the high importance of the harm/care dimension in liberal ideology: Those are charitable organizations caring for the most vulnerable in our societies and abroad, like drug addicts, abused women and people in (former) war zones.

**Conservative CS**, on the end of the ideological spectrum, ranks in terms of legitimacy much higher than liberal CS, close to the benchmark sentiment score. The by far most important keyword in this corpus (see Figure 6 and Figure 8) is “*ehrenamtlich*” (engl. *voluntary*), showing that this part of CS consists mainly of small traditional associations that rely on members voluntary engagement. Examples are “*Heimatvereine*” (engl. associations in the area of traditional culture), associations in the area of disaster relief, “*Studentenverbindungen*” and “*Burschenschaften*” (engl. *fraternities*), and “*Fremdenverkehrsvereine*” (local interest groups to foster tourism, e.g. by maintenance of public spaces). The most frequent keywords in this conservative CS corpus are *together*, *members*, *family*, *municipality*, highlighting that this segment of CS is about community building, that strong bonding ties are forged here. The keywords in the corpus confirm that this part of civil society can be conceptualized as hegemonic, i.e. the CS that forms a protective belt around the established institutions of (bourgeois) society.

The sentiment score of the benchmark corpus is roughly constant **over time**, thus there is no general trend visible in the data for the news to become more negatively or positively charged. There is a significant change, however, in the moral content: From 2006 to 2020, the

median amount of vocabulary that is morally charged per article is increasing steadily. As the regressions on pages 21-22 show, morally charged articles tend to have more negative sentiment scores. This relationship stays constant over time. Further on, there is negative correlation between liberal content and the sentiment score (see Figure 4 & Figure 10), which is more pronounced since 2014 (see pages 21-22). This trend is barely visible for liberal CS (Figure 4): Liberal CS is slightly less negatively connoted in 2010 –right after the financial crisis - compared to 2020 – within the general backlash to conservatism – but the difference is not statistically significant.

The broader socio-cultural developments can be traced in the Austrian media data under scrutiny: The discourse is becoming increasingly charged with moral vocabulary (Figure 9), especially after 2014. Liberal content is evaluated ever more negatively compared to conservative content (regression on page 21). This effect is clearly discernible after 2010. Hence, there are **clear traces of the cultural backlash** in Austrian media data.

Dividing CS into two distinct groups, namely the liberal counter-hegemonic compared to the conservative hegemonic CS, reveals interesting patterns about the representation of those groups in Austrian mainstream media: The liberal counter-hegemonic CS enjoys much lower legitimacy, as signified by negative sentiments (Figure 4). This bias is not significantly increasing, though, which implies that **counter-hegemonic CS is *not* losing ground** in Austria. Conservative, hegemonic CS is also *not* gaining ground in terms of more positive sentiments (regressions on pages 21-22). Thus, unlike the developments in Poland and Hungary, the cultural backlash seems not to be driven by CS as produced in mainstream media.

## 5. Limitations and Outlook

The preliminary results are based on 2 random samples of 200,000 out of the whole of 900,000 articles, evaluated over 3 different KWIC window sizes. To further corroborate the **robustness** of results, the implementation of a bootstrapping algorithm with at least  $n=100$  random samples would be desirable. **Bootstrapping** would be a way to get reliable estimates of the central coefficients' confidence intervals – so far, the estimated variances and p-values are of limited reliability, given the (necessary) large sample sizes involved.

Improvements and additional **validation** procedures for the **dictionaries** used are intended. The moral foundations dictionary is based on Graham's and Haidt's original work, it has been repeatedly used and validated. But it is solely based on Graham's and Haidt's

theory guided inclusion of relevant terms, done within the cultural framework of the English language. Recently, a group of researchers developed a crowd-sourced version of the dictionary, which includes terms based on the annotations of large samples of human coders (Hopp et al., 2020). The application of a translation of this **extended moral foundations dictionary** would further increase the validity of the results. Further on, the German translation of the dictionary has so far been only validated on a data set of 4,000,000 tweets from German politicians, in which the desired liberal/ conservative pattern was clearly visible. However, the validation based on representative samples of human coders will be necessary to ensure that there are no biases involved in the **translation** to another cultural space.

Above that, the **sentiment dictionary** used so far is based on a bag-of-words approach, thus does not take the structure and relation of language into account. Advances in **word embedding models** over the last years offer promising avenues to get measurements that could be more sensitive to capture the concept of legitimacy as used in this paper. In any case, the classifications based on the sentiment dictionary will be evaluated in much more detail to learn more about the discursive production of legitimacy of CS in Austria.

The **CS-dictionary**, which is of crucial importance in the construction of the corpus under analysis, has not been systematically validated yet. This will be done (a) by performing the analysis done so far for subgroups within the dictionary (e.g. only protests and demonstrations), and (b) by manually annotating a random sample of a substantive size to get precise estimates for precision and sensitivity, as well as clues about potential biases.

## 6. Appendix

Figure 3: *Boxplot of sentiments associated with CS KWIC, compared to benchmark corpus*

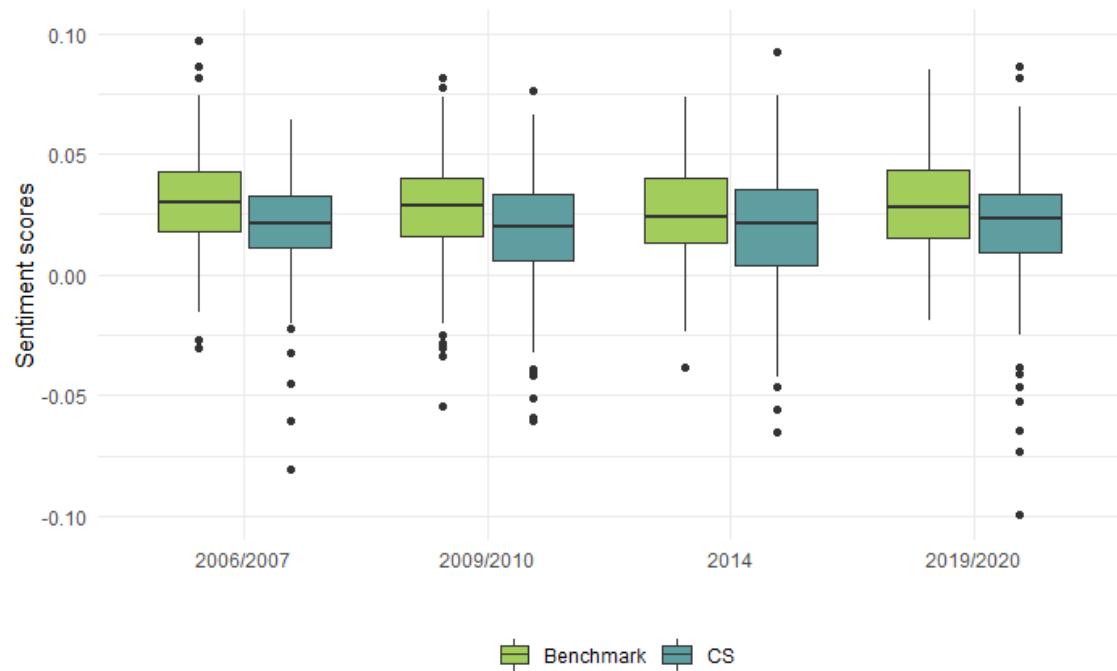


Figure 4: *Scatterplot of sentiments associated with different fields of CS*

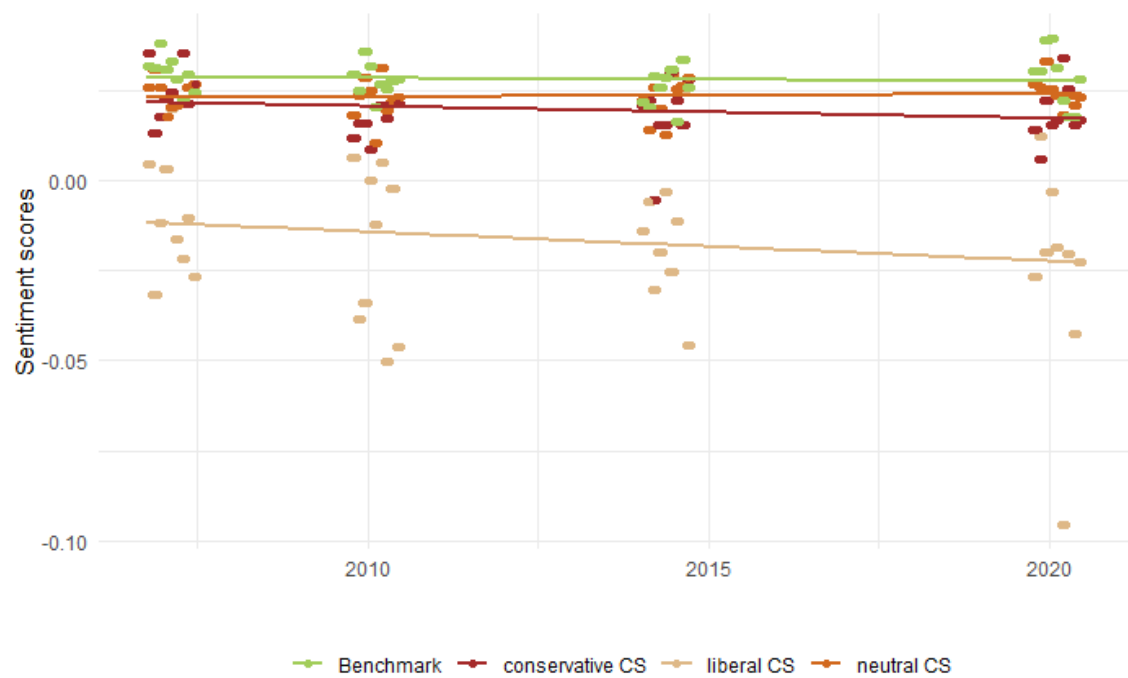




Figure 5: Liberal CS-KWIC-corpus, most frequent words

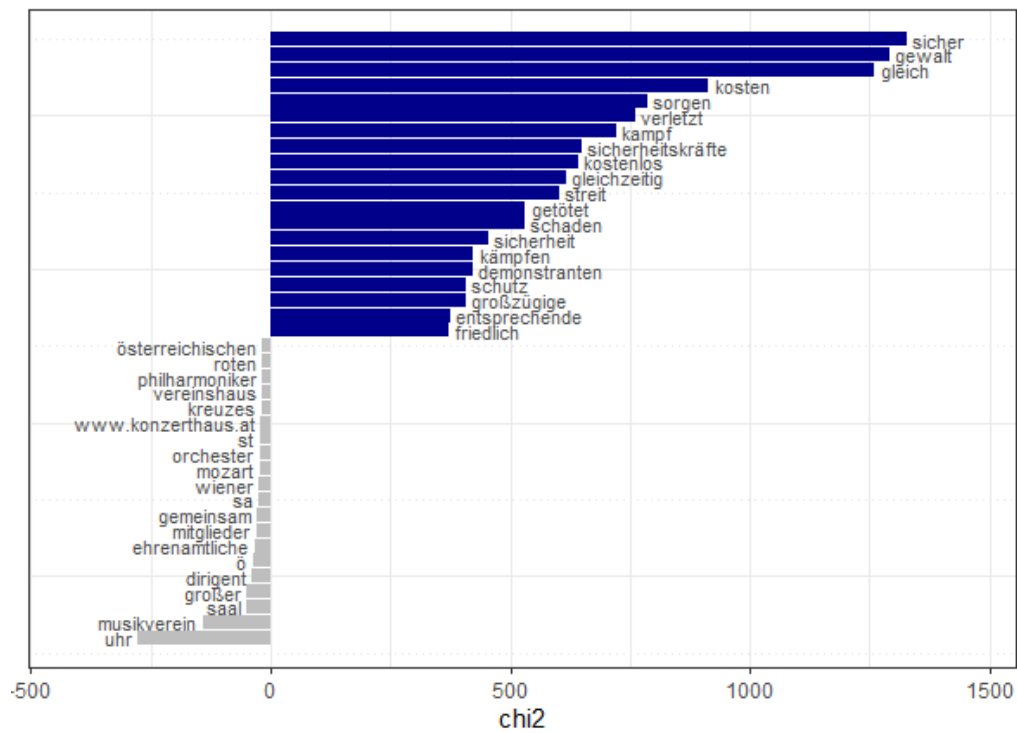


Figure 6: Conservative CS-KWIC corpus, most frequent keywords

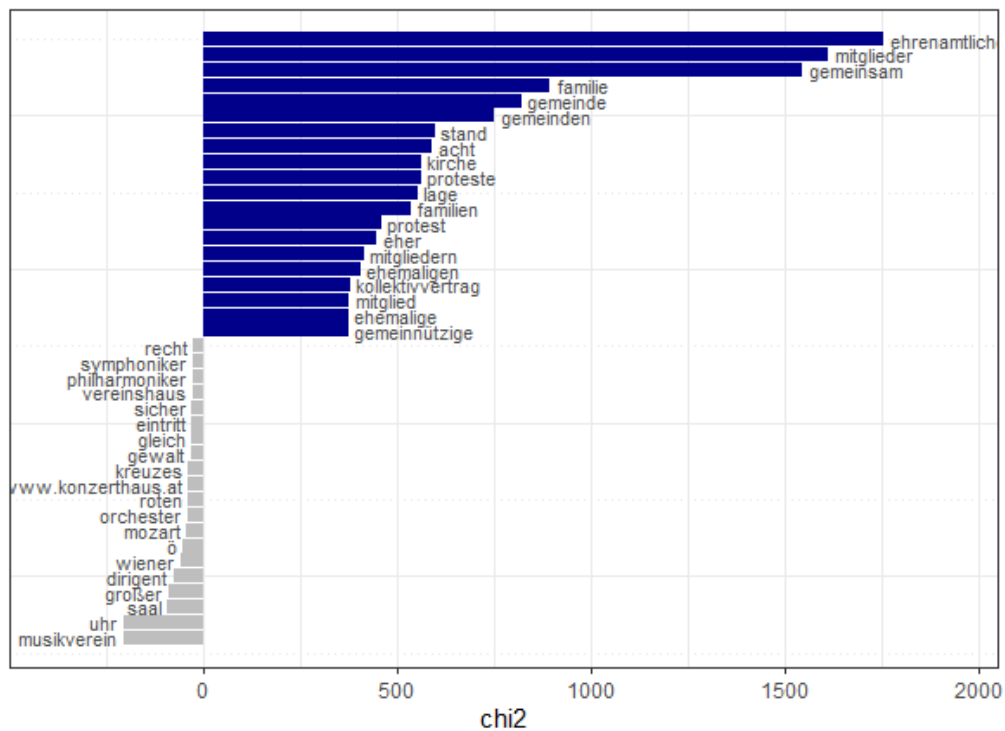


Figure 7: Liberal CS KWIC corpus, CS-Keywords

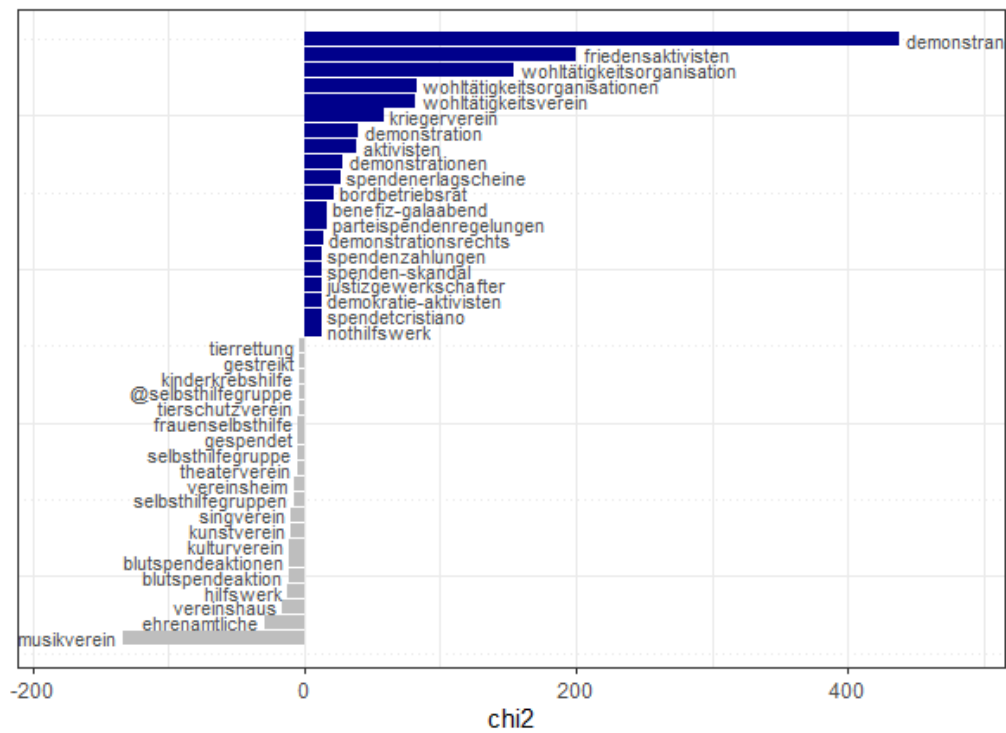


Figure 8: Conservative CS-KWIC corpus, CS Keywords

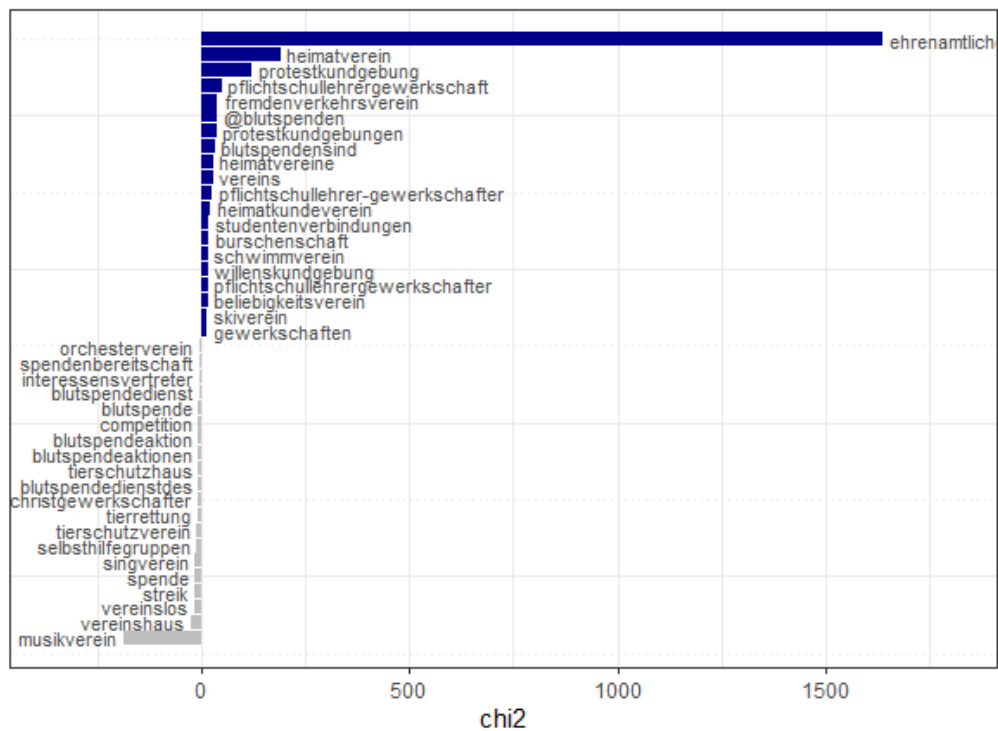


Figure 9: Amount of morally charged words (MO) within CS KWIC, compared to benchmark corpus

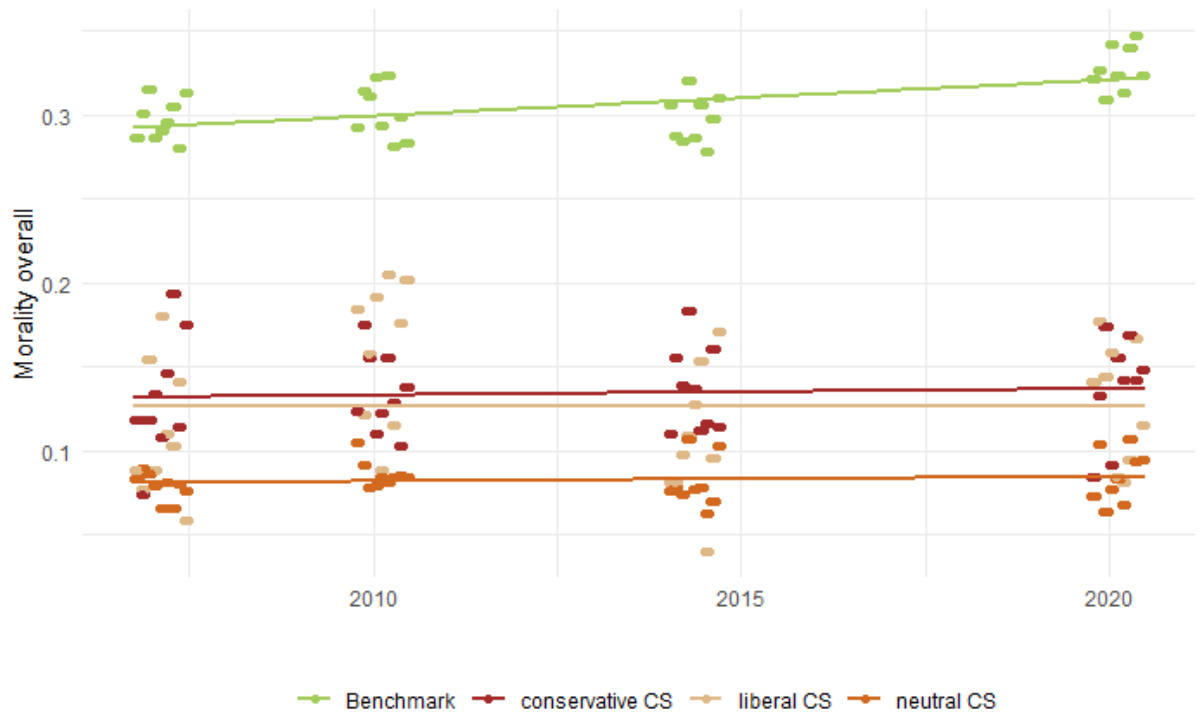


Figure 10: Moral foundations index (MFI) of negative and positive subcorpora

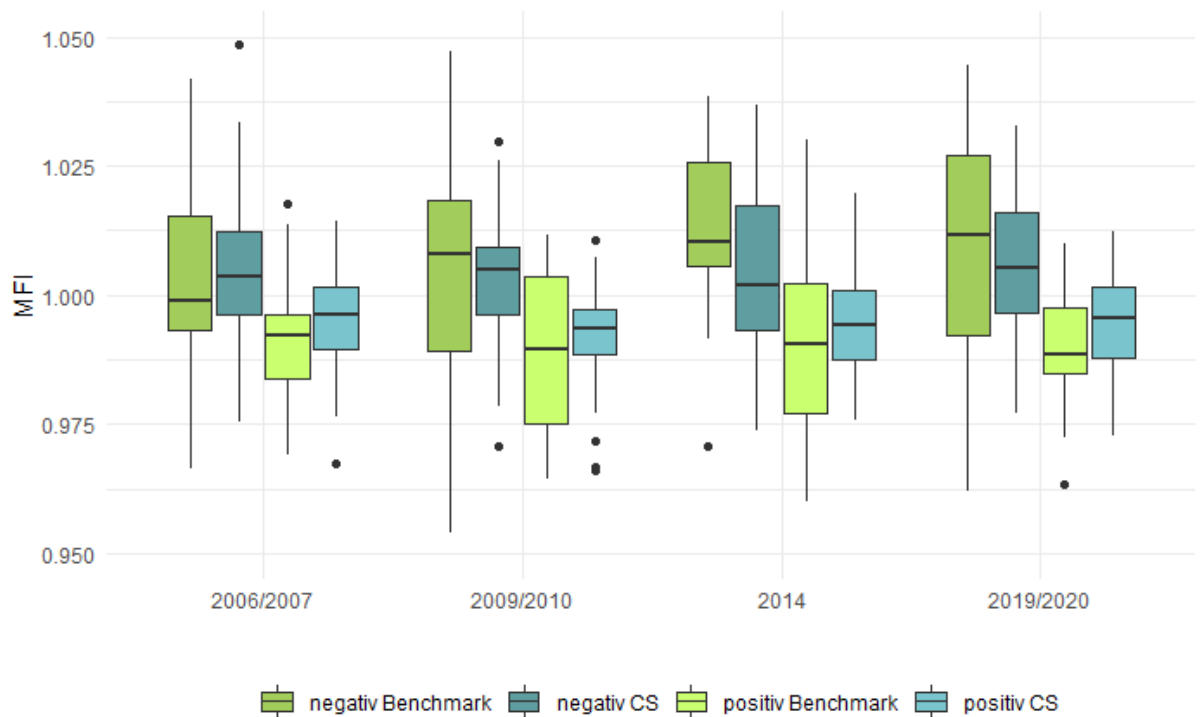
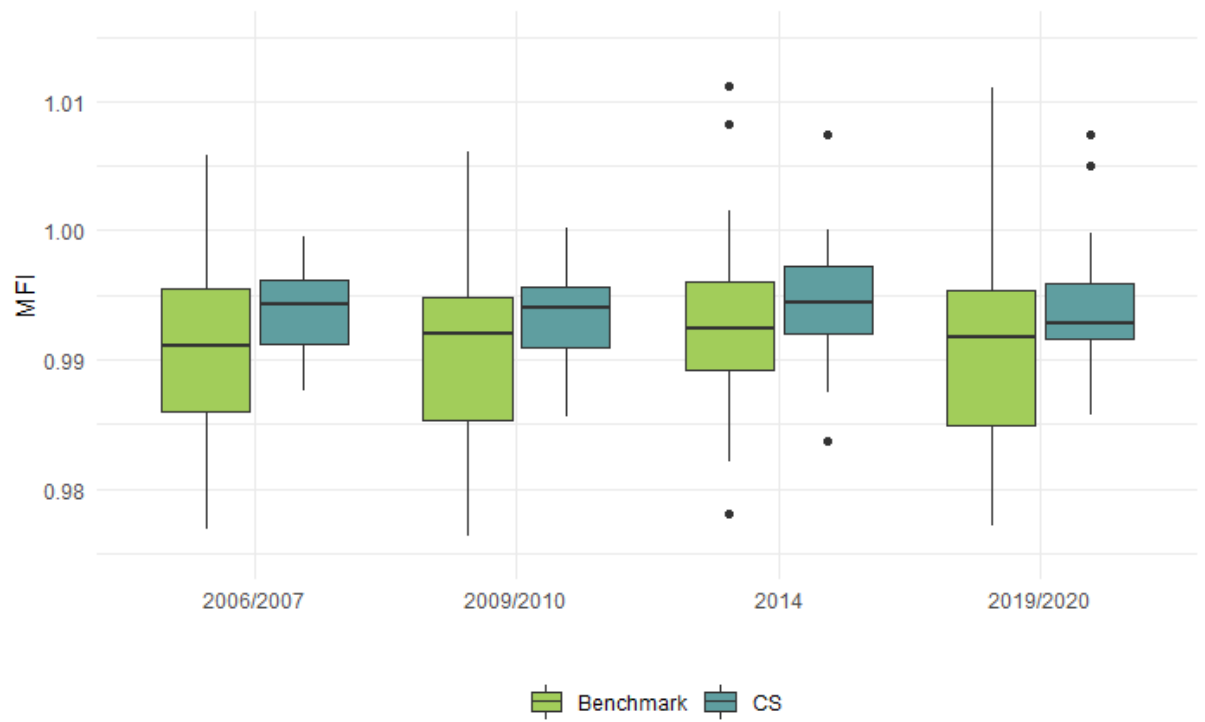


Figure 11: Moral foundations index (MFI) of CS KWIC, compared to benchmark corpus



OLS regressions (including dummy variables for media outlets, benchmark: Kronen Zeitung)

=====				
	Benchmark corpus			
	-----			
	Dependent variable: Sentiment score			
	2006	2010	2014	2020
-----				
KURIER	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.002 (0.003)	-0.011*** (0.003)	-0.009*** (0.003)
ORF	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.007** (0.004)	-0.007** (0.003)	-0.012*** (0.003)
PRESSE	0.0002 (0.003)	-0.001 (0.003)	-0.0005 (0.003)	-0.007** (0.003)
STANDARD	-0.005 (0.003)	-0.006* (0.003)	-0.012*** (0.003)	-0.014*** (0.003)
<b>MFI</b>	<b>-0.078*** (0.012)</b>	<b>-0.074*** (0.012)</b>	<b>-0.121*** (0.011)</b>	<b>-0.123*** (0.011)</b>
MO	-0.012*** (0.001)	-0.014*** (0.001)	-0.012*** (0.001)	-0.014*** (0.001)
Constant	0.121** (0.012)	0.117*** (0.012)	0.163*** (0.011)	0.174*** (0.011)
-----				
Observations	17,403	16,608	18,213	19,002
R2	0.012	0.015	0.017	0.020
Adjusted R2	0.011	0.014	0.017	0.020
Residual Std. Error	0.139 (df = 17396)	0.139 (df = 16601)	0.139 (df = 18206)	0.142 (df = 18995)
F Statistic	34.408*** (df = 6; 17396)	40.940*** (df = 6; 16601)	53.332*** (df = 6; 18206)	64.826*** (df = 6; 18995)
=====				

Note:

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

=====				
KWIC CS corpus				
-----				
	Dependent variable: Sentiment score			
	2006	2010	2014	2020
-----				
KURIER	-0.009*** (0.003)	-0.011*** (0.003)	-0.017*** (0.003)	-0.015*** (0.003)
ORF	-0.015*** (0.003)	-0.023*** (0.003)	-0.020*** (0.003)	-0.028*** (0.003)
PRESSE	-0.012*** (0.004)	-0.024*** (0.004)	-0.022*** (0.004)	-0.020*** (0.004)
STANDARD	-0.020*** (0.004)	-0.026*** (0.004)	-0.026*** (0.004)	-0.018*** (0.004)
<b>MFI</b>	<b>-0.099***</b> <b>(0.013)</b>	<b>-0.086***</b> <b>(0.013)</b>	<b>-0.095***</b> <b>(0.012)</b>	<b>-0.107***</b> <b>(0.013)</b>
MO	-0.011*** (0.001)	-0.009*** (0.001)	-0.009*** (0.001)	-0.012*** (0.001)
Constant	0.147*** (0.013)	0.134*** (0.013)	0.143*** (0.012)	0.159*** (0.013)
-----				
Observations	15,364	13,501	13,651	14,292
R2	0.014	0.016	0.017	0.021
Adjusted R2	0.014	0.015	0.017	0.020
Residual Std. Error	0.128 (df = 15357)	0.129 (df = 13494)	0.131 (df = 13644)	0.131 (df = 14285)
F Statistic	37.396*** (df = 6; 15357)	35.841*** (df = 6; 13494)	40.190*** (df = 6; 13644)	49.868*** (df = 6; 14285)
=====				
Note:				*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Figure 12: CS-dictionary (high precision – less sensitivity, 173 entries)

Benefiz.(1,5)abend	Aktivität	.*verein\$	Organisation	gewerkschaftenbund	Organisation	Widerstand.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation	interessensvertreter	Subjekte
Benefiz.(1,5)veranstaltung	Aktivität	.*vereine\$	Organisation	benefiz.(1,10)organisation	Organisation	Tierschutz.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation	Demonstranten	Subjekte
Benefiz.(1,5)aktion	Aktivität	^Vereins.*	Organisation	spenden.(1,10)organisation	Organisation	Verbrecher.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation	Demonstrierende	Subjekte
Benefiz.(1,5)auktion	Aktivität	^NGOS	Organisation	wohltaetigkeit.(1,10)organisation	Organisation	Student.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation	Aktivisten	Subjekte
Benefiz.(1,5)konzert	Aktivität	^NGOs\$	Organisation	nachbarschaftshilf	Organisation	Schüler.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation	Aktivistinnen	Subjekte
Benefiz.(1,5)vernissage	Aktivität	Non.?profit.(1,5)Organisation	Organisation	hilfswerk	Organisation	Jugend.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation	ehrenamtliche\$	Subjekte
Benefiz.(1,5)event	Aktivität	Gemeinnützig.(1,10)Organisation	Organisation	selbsthilfe.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation	Feuerwehr.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation	freiwillige\$	Subjekte
Benefiz.(1,5)fest	Aktivität	Hilfsorganisation	Organisation	selbsthilfe.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Katastrophenschutz.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation	burschenschaftler	Subjekte
Benefiz.(1,10)markt	Aktivität	Hilf.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	nachbarschaft.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation	Kunst.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation	gewerkschafter	Subjekte
Benefiz.(1,10)gala	Aktivität	Menschenrechtsorganisation	Organisation	nachbarschaft.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Künstler.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation	betriebsrat	Subjekte
Benefiz.(1,10)jazz	Aktivität	Umwelt.(1,10)organisation	Organisation	burschenschaft\$	Organisation	zivileseil.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation	Umweltschützer	Subjekte
Benefiz.(1,10)kabarett	Aktivität	Rettungs.(1,10)organisation	Organisation	mittelschul.(1,4)verbind	Organisation	selbsthilf.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation		
Benefiz.(1,10)matinee	Aktivität	Verbraucherschutz.(1,10)organisation	Organisation	student.(1,4)verbind	Organisation	bürgerrechts.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation		
Benefiz.(1,10)lauf	Aktivität	Freiwilligen.(1,10)organisation	Organisation	kameradschafts	Organisation	migrant.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation		
Benefiz.(1,10)marathon	Aktivität	ehrenamtlich.(1,10)organisation	Organisation	Gemeinnützig.(1,5)Stiftung	Organisation	kriminell.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation		
Benefiz.(1,5)punsch	Aktivität	Grundrechte.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Gemeinnützig.(1,5)Unternehm	Organisation	schutz.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation		
Benefiz.(1,10)spiel	Aktivität	Lobby.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Gemeinnützig.(1,5)AG	Organisation	benefiz.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation		
Benefiz.(1,10)show	Aktivität	Terror.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Gemeinnützig.(1,5)GmbH	Organisation	spenden.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation		
Benefiz.(1,10)essen	Aktivität	Untergrund.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Kultur.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	wohltaetigkeit.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation		
Benefiz.(1,10)veranstaltung	Aktivität	Politisch.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Nichtregierungsorganisation	Organisation	nachbarschaft.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation		
Blutspende	Aktivität	Widerstand.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Opferorganisation	Organisation	nachbarschaft.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation		
Bürgerbeteiligung	Aktivität	Tierschutz.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Aktivistengruppe	Organisation	Kultur.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation		
Demonstration.(1,10)gegen	Aktivität	Verbrecher.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Behindert.(1,10)organisation	Organisation	Opfergruppe	Organisation		
Kundgebung	Aktivität	Student.(1,10)organisation	Organisation	arbeit.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Aktivistengruppe	Organisation		
Demonstrierten.(1,10)gegen	Aktivität	Schüler.(1,10)organisation	Organisation	beratungsorganisation.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Behindert.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation		
Demonstrieren.(1,10)gegen	Aktivität	Jugend.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Non.?profit.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation	beratungs.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation		
Geldspende	Aktivität	Feuerwehr.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Gemeinnützig.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation	Frauensebsthilfe	Organisation		
Gespendet*	Aktivität	Katastrophenschutz.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Hilfsgruppe	Organisation	Freizeit.(1,3)organisation	Organisation		
Gestreikt	Aktivität	Kunst.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Menschenrechtsgruppe	Organisation	kinderkrebshilfe	Organisation		
^Streik\$	Aktivität	Künstler.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Umwelt.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation	Industriell.(1,5)verein	Organisation		
karitativ.(1,5)Tätigkeit	Aktivität	zivileseil.(1,10)organisation	Organisation	Rettungs.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation	karitativ.(1,10)organisation	Organisation		
karitativ.(1,5)Arbeit	Aktivität	selbsthilf.(1,10)organisation	Organisation	Verbraucherschutz.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation	schutz.(1,5)organisation	Organisation		
gemeinnützig.(1,5)Arbeit	Aktivität	bürgerrechts.(1,10)organisation	Organisation	Freiwilligen.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation	schutz.(1,5)verband	Organisation		
gemeinnützig.(1,5)Tätigkeit	Aktivität	migrant.(1,10)organisation	Organisation	ehrenamtlich.(1,10)gruppe	Organisation	Kulturvereinigung	Organisation		
Volksbegehren	Aktivität	kriminell.(1,10)organisation	Organisation	Grundrechte.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation	Mafiaorganisation	Organisation		
Petition	Aktivität	schutz.(1,5)organisation	Organisation	Lobby.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation	Mieterverein	Organisation		
Sachspenden	Aktivität	interessensvertretung	Organisation	Terror.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation	Tierschutzverband	Organisation		
Spende*	Aktivität	gewerkschaft\$	Organisation	Untergrund.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation	Anonyme Alkoholiker	Organisation		
		gewerkschaften\$	Organisation	Politisch.(1,5)gruppe	Organisation	Opfer-Notruf	Organisation		
						Drogenhilfe	Organisation		
						Tierrettung	Organisation		
						Tierschutzhaus	Organisation		

\*: NOT (kommunion OR firmung OR taufe OR sakrament)) OR NEAR.3(trost.spende) OR NEAR.3(hoffnung.spende)

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