

COVIDisc – A focus on vector populations

The containment of the pandemic relies heavily on the communication between public health organizations and individual social groups. Therefore, public discourses and discursive practices of specific audiences play a crucial role in the policy implementation during a pandemic.

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Aim of the Project

- Provide understanding of (regional) **temporality** and (regional) **dynamics** of pandemic discourse
- gain an understanding of the public discourse and its **perception by young people** in Switzerland
- formulate **communication recommendations for public health organizations**
- Develop a **strategy for crisis communication** as well as audience and message design for the current COVID 19 pandemic and for **future public health measures**

Focus on younger population ("vector population": 15-34 years old)

- highly mobile and socially active
- lower risk of severe COVID-19 infection
- society demands solidary behavior

Methods & Data

- linguistic **discourse analysis** | quantitative **survey** | qualitative **interviews** with vector population and public health experts
- **Multilingual** Web Corpus (German + Italian), including Mass Media and Twitter
- 921 survey participants
- 60 interviews
- **Study period:** 01.12.2019-01.10.2020

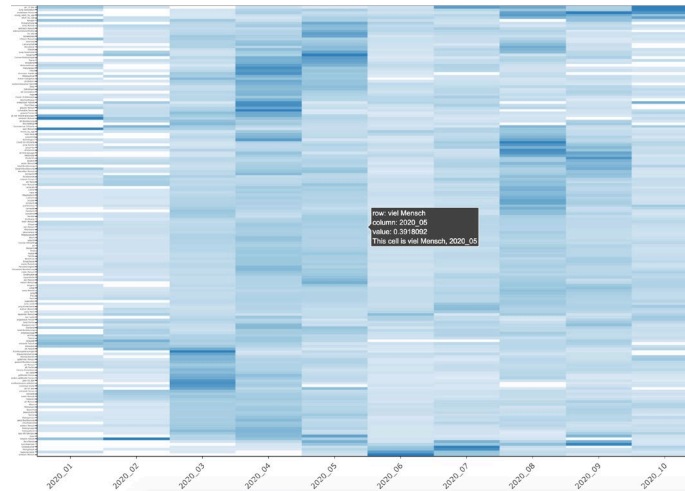


Fig. 1: terms referring to the vector population and other groups over time

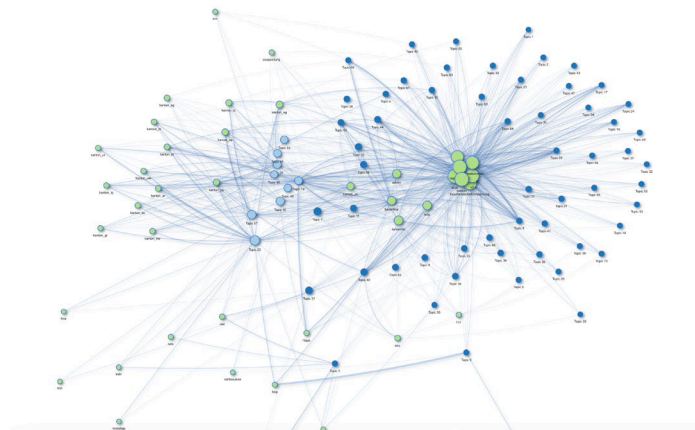


Fig. 2: Topic-Actor-Network

Selected Results I: Focus on Economic Consequences

- The vector population is constructed against an **economic background**: in both German and Italian, **economic consequences for the youth** are a dominant topic.
- Other, less frequently mentioned secondary consequences concern social life (violence and abuse in families), psychological health (depression, anxiety) and physical health.

Selected Results II: The Pandemic as Perceived Normality

Reception of the discourse:

- Change in media use frequency and content over time
- **successively reduced time that was spent in searching for Covid information**
- Participants were stressed by the negative news and by perceived process of *normalization*.
- Thus, the Coronavirus situation has become normality, so there was no interest in searching for new information anymore.