

Reaction of non-populist Parties to the AfD

Linus Schmitz, Cedric Dorrer, Benedikt Igl



Research Question

How do non-populist parties change their political-ideological positioning relative to each other, as measured by their tweets, after the AfD moved to the right in July 2015?

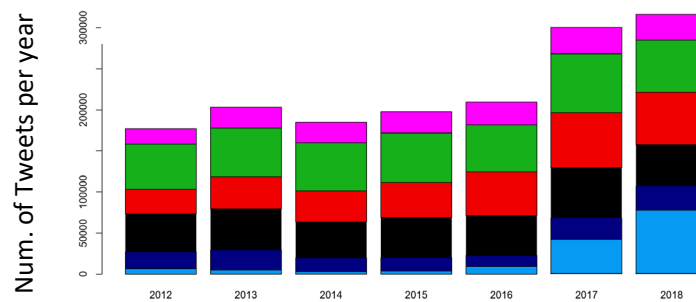


Data



n = 1.588.399 Tweets, MdB of Parties:

AfD, CDU, CSU, Grüne, Linke and SPD



Method

Wordfish:

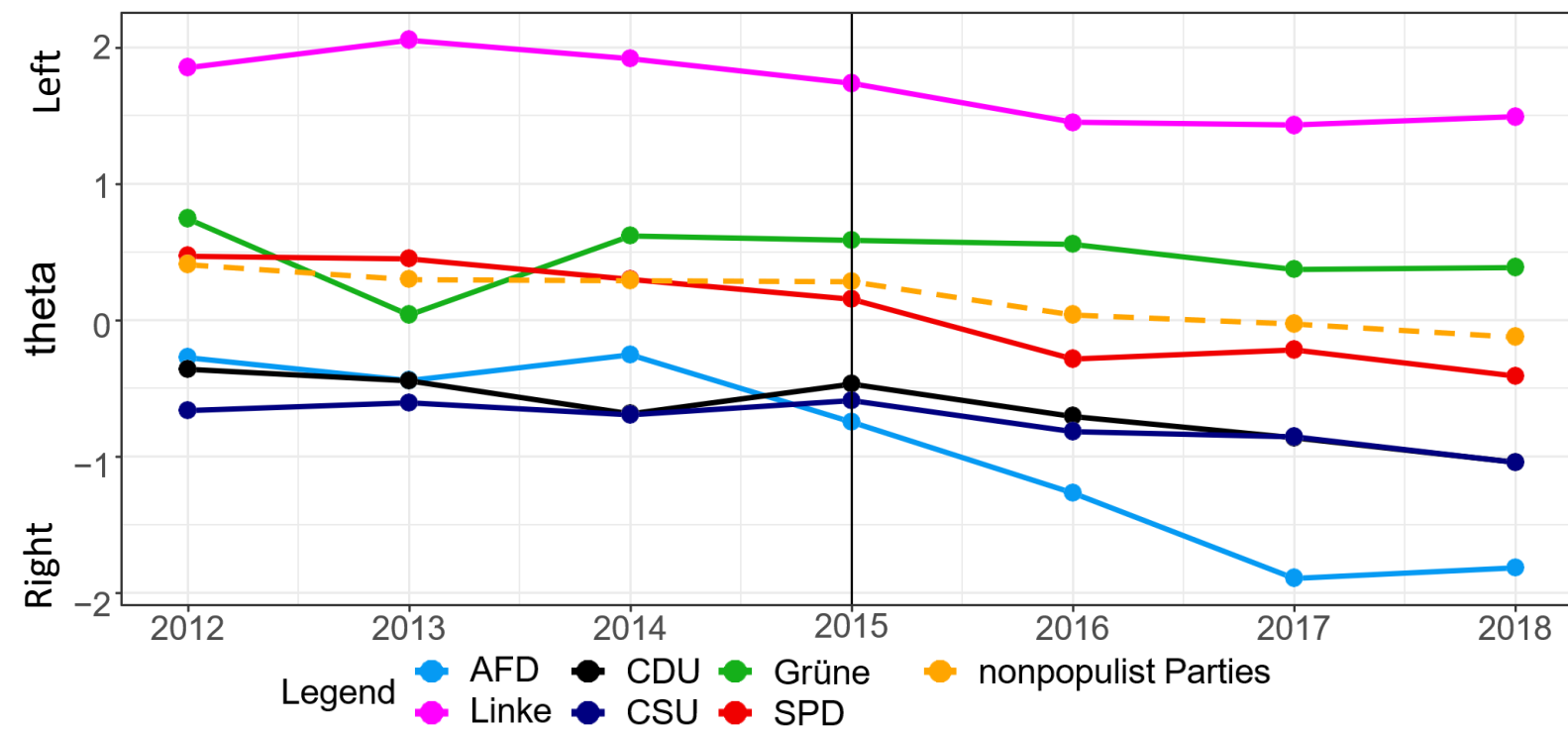
- Estimates relative positions of parties
- Word usage as basis for analysis
- Unsupervised --> no comparison texts
- Left-right classification is done by researchers
- Best practice: election programs subdivided into topics

Assumptions:

- (Relative) word use conveys ideological positions



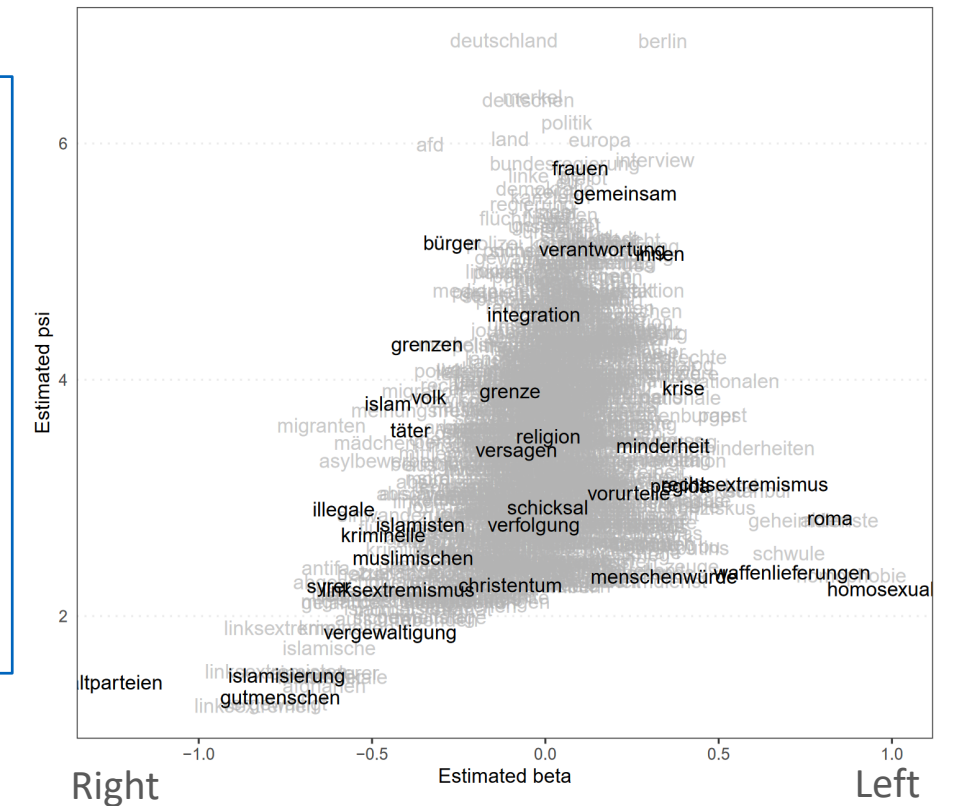
Ideological Shift of Non-Populist-Parties on the Topic of „Migration“



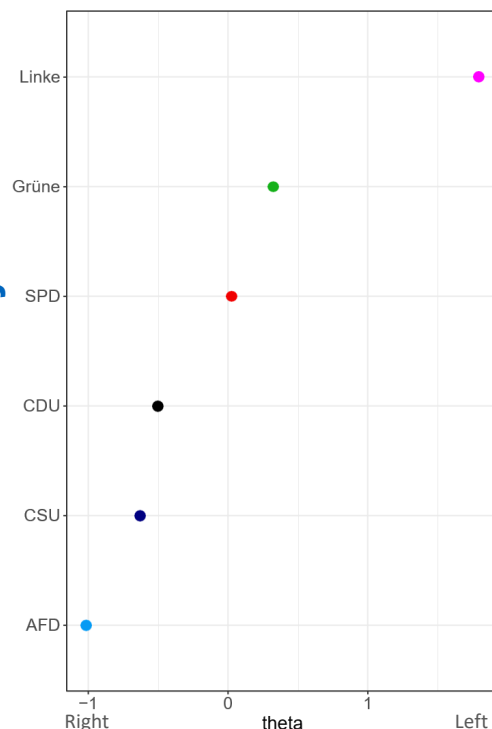
psi = word fixed effects (frequency)

theta = document positions at time t

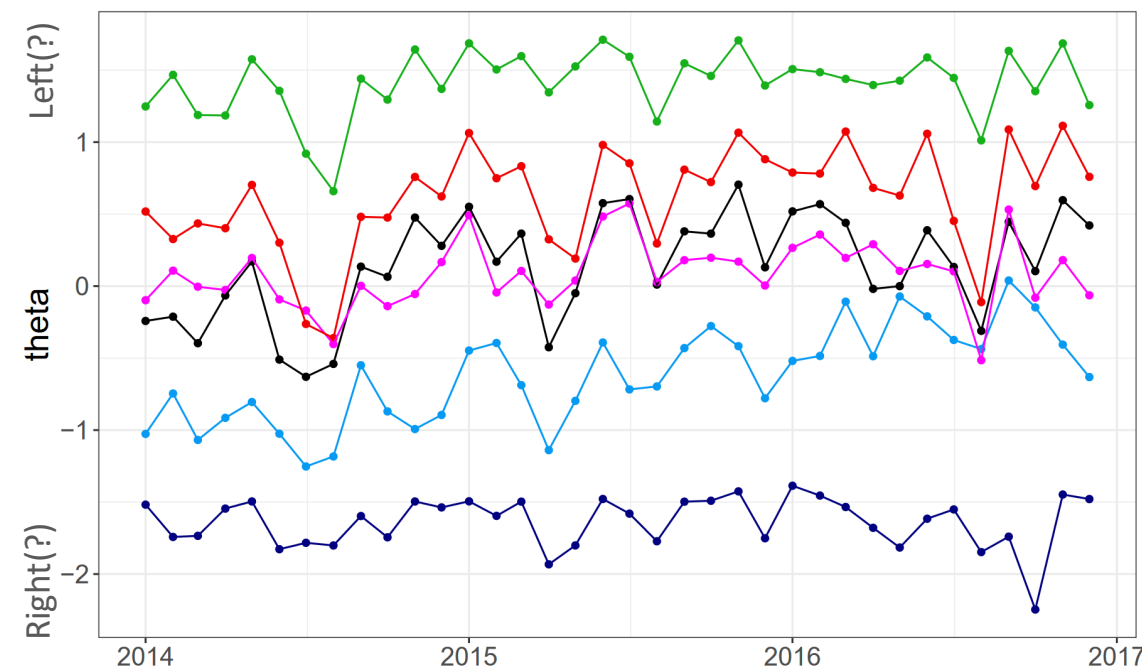
beta = word weights



Wordfish - Party Manifestoes



Wordfish - All Tweets



Process / Conclusion

- Wordfish didn't work well on Tweets instead of Party Manifestoes – Its intended use – as can be seen [Wordfish - All Tweets]
- Additional pre-processing of the dataset of Tweets was necessary (besides stop-word-removal etc.)
- Working with specific topics - as is best practice for WF, we started getting more workable results
- As seen above, in the general Topic of "Migration", a measurable shift from the non-populist parties could be made visible

