



# Twitter as the digital amphitheater

An analysis on Swedish Twitter users in #Migpol during the day before the Swedish election 2018

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Twitter som den digitala amfiteatern

En analys på svenska Twitter användare dagen före Riksdagsvalet 2018

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## **Abstract:**

The purpose of this study was to analyze Swedish Twitter users participation in Swedish migration politics in an online setting by examining the interactions and discussions between users on the platform the day before the Swedish election of 2018. The potential insight into political views that social media presents gave us an opportunity to explore how Swedish citizens, politicians, or members of other social and professional roles involved themselves politically and how they interacted with others on Twitter. We did this by examining the hashtag “#Migpol” (short for “Migration politics”). We collected and analyzed a total amount of 328 tweets and an additional 400 replies to these tweets where users had included the hashtag. This was done in order to construct our network which consisted of the platform functions @mention and @reply. It was through these we analyzed users interactions with other users and organizations. To perform our study, we chose a mixed method approach of network analysis and a secondary method inspired by discourse analysis. For our analysis, we applied a theoretical framework consisting of Erving Goffman’s dramaturgical theory and Alessandro Pizzorno’s ideas on political participation. Pizzorno’s ideas from 1970 were reworked and adapted in order to fit for research on social media. The result of the network analysis was displayed as a visualization that revealed how multiple users obtained various values of centrality due to the interaction rate between users, it also revealed that the total number of mutual relationships in the network was low and instead there was a prevalence of clusters of smaller networks inside the much larger network. The tweets containing the hashtags were then analyzed with the method inspired by discourse analysis as we wanted a deeper insight into how the users expressed their opinions. This was also done in order to find dominant topics and whether or not the discourse was affected by the actor’s centrality value. The result of this showed that an anti-immigration party and the party leader public debate on the 7th of September held a great focus while there was a third subject emerging which showed signs of nationalism. The discourse was not affected by centrality value but an indication that some actors were more known inside the hashtag than others.

**Keywords:** Migration politics, Network analysis, Online discourse, Political participation.

## Abstrakt:

Syftet med den här studien var att analysera svenska Twitter användares deltagande i svensk migrationspolitik online genom att forska kring interaktioner och diskussioner mellan olika användare på plattformen en dag före Riksdagsvalet 2018. Den potentiella insynen i politisk åskådning som sociala medier kan bistå med gav oss en möjlighet att utforska hur svenska medborgare, politiker, eller medlemmar i andra sociala- samt yrkesroller involverar sig i politisk aktivitet och hur de interagerade med andra på Twitter. Forskningen i detta arbete har skett genom att granska hashtaggen “#Migpol” (kort för migrationspolitik). Vi samlade och analyserade totalt 328 tweets samt ytterligare 400 svar på dessa, där användarna inkluderat hashtaggen. Det var med dessa vi konstruerade vårt nätverk som består av @replies och @mentions och det var genom dessa plattforms funktioner som vi också analyserade användarnas interaktioner samt diskussioner med andra användare och organisationer. Vi använde oss utav en metod blandning bestående av nätverks analys och en sekundär metod inspirerad av diskurs analys. Som underlag för vår analys, använde vi oss utav ett teoretiskt ramverk bestående av Erving Goffmans dramaturgiska teori samt Alessandro Pizzornos idéer om politiskt deltagande. Pizzornos idéer från 1970 var återskapade och anpassade för att de skulle kunna bli applicerbara för forskning på sociala medier. Resultatet av nätverksanalysen visade att många av de svenska användare fick olika värden av centralitet på grund av att dom integrerade i stor utsträckning med varandra, dock visade det sig att ömsesidiga förhållanden i nätverket var väldigt få. Resultatet visade också att det fanns flera mängder av mindre kluster av nätverk inom det större nätverket. Vi analyserade också de tweets som innehöll hashtaggen med metoden inspirerad av diskursanalys, detta då ville få en insikt i hur användarna uttryckte sina åsikter i diskussioner som uppstått. Det var också på så vis vi kunde urskilja vilka ämnen som dominerade inom diskussionerna samt huruvida centralitet påverkade diskussionerna. Resultatet av denna analys visade att ett parti med anti-migration åsikter och partiledardebatten som ägde rum den 7:e September var i fokus men att det även fanns spår av ett tredje resultat som indikerade en viss nivå av nationalism. Resultatet visade också att centralitet påverkade inte diskussionerna, dock fann vi en indikation på att vissa användare kan vara mer kända inom hashtaggen än andra.

Nyckelord: Migrationspolitik, Nätverksanalys, Online diskurs, Politiskt deltagande.

# Foreword

Here be dragons

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In contribution to this essay

Sebastian wrote - 2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 3, 3.1, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3, 3.3, 3.4, 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.4.1, 4.4.2, 4.4.3, 4.4.4, 5.

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# 1 Introduction

Social media presents not only new ways for communication and sharing creative content but also a new way of showing participation and raising awareness for social issues. To some, this participation may be as part of a current trend while others use it to further their own agenda (Strömbäck, 2014). For example, Spierings and Jacobs (2013) argue that Barack Obama showed the potential power that lies in social media to garner political support.

While Twitter's user base is considerably smaller than Facebook (Statista, 2019a; Statista, 2019b), Svensson and Larsson (2016) argues that Twitter is "[...] largely an elite medium" (p. 12) as in their research they did not find as many private individuals with a political interest as they found those with a vested interest in politics such as politicians or political organizations (p. 12). Bruns and Highfield (2013) claims that, while using politically affiliated hashtags it is not necessarily the same as participating in a public debate, but it "provides for simple mechanism for citizens to invoke politicians [...] or anyone else with a Twitter account [...] and for these thoughts to be public and visible in a way that emailed communication, telephone calls, letters, or electorate office visits are not." (p. 671). Social media platforms such as Twitter has therefore made it easier to participate in the different discourses of society.

While Twitter has not been as popular as Facebook in Sweden, the platform offers great possibilities for information and ideas to be expressed due to its open, transparent, and low-threshold efforts for discussion and exchanges to manifest among the platform's users (Internetstiftelsen, 2018; Strömbäck, 2014). These established propositions of digital socialization offer the possibility for users to consume any politically related content at their own leisure, which in consequence has gradually reduced the power from the traditional mass-media to the user instead, as users are now free to choose what they want to be exposed to (Strömbäck, 2014).

In Sweden, migration politics has become a controversial subject for reasons such as the increasingly popular Sverigedemokraterna, a Swedish political party with xenophobic views and the foreign minister of the government calling the intake of immigrants "unsustainable" (Scarpa & Schierup, 2018, p. 200). We found that most research was focused on American individuals and their participation but not as much for Swedish participation. This study presents an opportunity to expand the research in understanding political participation on social media in Sweden during an election year.

## 1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this study was to contribute more research on how Swedish Twitter users make use of a political and potentially controversial hashtag to make their voice heard during an election year and to provide new ideas for existing theories. We were not interested in the strategic elements that are commonly associated with political communication (Strömbäck, 2014) but the communication of users participating in the hashtag. More specifically how the communication looked like for a controversial topic.

In order to do this, we created a theoretical framework consisting of Erving Goffman's dramaturgical theory of self-presentation and Alessandro Pizzorno's ideas of a political participation theory. We decided to take a mixed method approach, consisting of a network- and a secondary method inspired by discourse analysis and limited the study to #Migpol tweets made on the 8th of September 2018, the last day before the Swedish 2018 election. We chose the last day as research has shown that voters are undecided until the last weeks of the election (Strömbäck, 2014; Demker, 2018), which means that it is still a time where voters can be influenced by others.

## 1.2 Research questions

1. In #Migpol on Twitter on the 8th of September 2018, what are the different types of Swedish actors (private individuals, politicians, commercial organizations, etc.) present?
  - a. Which role of these actors is the most dominant in terms of centrality?
  - b. Which roles of these actors are the most dominant in terms of interactions in the hashtag?
2. How are the actors positioning themselves to indicate personal or collective belief when discussing the dominant topics?
  - a. How does the discourse relate to actor centrality in the network?

## 1.3 Delimitations

In preparation for this study, we utilized a software called Mecodify which is designed to gather data from social media platforms such as Twitter. This revealed that the number of users using #Migpol during the last month of the Swedish election of 2018 was well over 10,000.

However, we chose to focus on the last day before the election in order to bring down this number to make the data become much more manageable in our allotted time to write this study. This was also done as research indicated that a relatively large percent of the Swedish people have yet to decide where to place their vote which shows that it could still be a valuable day for research (Strömbäck 2014; Demker, 2018).

## 1.4 Disposition

While each chapter has a small text in italics beneath the main paragraph which explains what it contains, this section presents the essay, apart from the introduction chapter, in broader strokes for easy navigation. Chapter 2 presents our theoretical framework for this study, previous research that is similar to ours and how we will utilize the theories in our study. Chapter 3 contains the methods: network- and the secondary method inspired by discourse analysis and how we used them in combination with the theoretical framework to conduct our analysis. This chapter also presents our thoughts on the study's validity, reliability, generalizability, how we collected the data and a discussion on our sample data. The chapter ends with the research ethical guidelines and legislature that we have adhered to in this study. Chapter 4 presents how we created the visualizations and the results from our analysis. It also contains the analysis and discussions of the results that are presented. Chapter 5 will conclude the essay by first answering our research questions, a reflection on limitations that we encountered, how we overcome our limitations, and a discussion about future research and possible implications for society.

## 1.5 Definitions for terms

**Actor** - This study utilized Erving Goffman's work *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* and also how Goffman's use of the term "actor" in a dramaturgical setting. For this study, "actor" refers to how different individuals and organizations are coded in the network analysis. A full list of actors and an explanation of them can be found in 3.1.2.

**Centrality** - A short explanation of the term is relatively straightforward and is part of the network method, centrality shows an actors position in the network (Golbeck, 2013; Scott, 2017). This centrality is dependent on different factors such as nodes, edges and the structure of the network itself, all of which are part of the network analysis method. There are several ways of defining centrality in a network such as betweenness- and degree centrality. A more in-depth explanation for this term can be found in 3.1 Social Network analysis.

**Network** - In this study, the network was created by the interactions of users on Twitter inside the hashtag Migpol. This is similar to how previous research by Larsson and Moe (2013) have conducted their studies. In short, this network consists of user "A" interacting and therefore connecting with users "B" and "C" through the functions on the platform defined as @reply or @mention. A more detailed explanation of the method and how the network was constructed can be found in 3.1 Social Network analysis.

**Interaction** - For this study, the network was constructed by user interactions. This means that we examined primarily how users on the platform actively replied to or messaged others through the "@" functions that are integrated on the platform. There is an important distinction between @reply and @mention, as the former does not only create a link to their target user but can also provide an arguably arbitrary link to all others who have replied before their tweet as well. The latter can be used more freely

such as creating a new link to another user inside a reply or as an attempt to bring attention to their own post.

**Participation** - In this study, we used a reworked idea of political participation made by Alessandro Pizzorno from 1970. We have adapted a list we found in Pizzorno's research where he presents explanations on how people participated in political content in 1970 and reworked it in an attempt to make it fit for research on social media political participation. The original list and explanation of it can be found in 2.2 while our reworked version can be found in 2.4.

**Alternative media** - In this study, alternative media relates to right-wing media that is actively criticizing the left or have a focus for their criticism towards migration. This is following Holt's (2018) argument that this is often a shared stance amongst the alternative outlets, as traditional outlets are seen as part of "the establishment" and unable to provide an unbiased opinion (p. 50).

**Secondary method** - In this study, what we refer to as the secondary method is a method inspired by discourse analysis which we used to analyze the opinions actors expressed in their tweets. Discussed more in 3.2

## 2 Theoretical framework

*This chapter presents the two theories we have chosen: Goffman's dramaturgical theory and Pizzorno's ideas of what constitutes as political participation. It also contains previous research that is similar to our study, some of which has been done utilizing these theories on digital media, how we intend to use the theories in our study and a critical discussion for our chosen theories.*

### 2.1 Goffman's dramaturgical theory

According to Erving Goffman (2014), when individuals communicate or interact with one another it is akin to a dramatic play wherein we take on roles similar to actors.

In order for us to understand the different forms of expressions in this play, Goffman (2014) argues that there are two ways that can be used to explain how an individual is perceived: what they transmit and what they transfer (p. 12). Understanding these forms of expressions matter as he argues that individuals in social interactions will change how they act depending on their personal goals for that interaction (p.13).

The transmitted expression according to Goffman (2014) is the traditional way of communication, i.e. how we use verbal symbols or their replacement, such as text, in order to spread information (p. 12). In contrast, the transferred expression as Goffman (2014) explains it, is the one perceived when the acting individual is engaged in some form of activity that can be viewed by others (p. 12). While the term "activity" can be applied broadly, it is according to Goffman an activity where the focus is not information transmission (p. 12).

However, Goffman (2014) also states that these expressions are not flawless when applied to the perception of communication and actions (p. 12). For example, an individual may be well known within a

community, either by fame or infamy and this will, in turn, affect how their actions and what they say is perceived by its members. Similarly, Goffman (2014) also states that an individual may attempt to use this fact to work in his favor (p. 13; 15).

Another important concept for the dramaturgical theory is the facade which Goffman (2014) describes as “the expressive equipment” for an actors performance (p. 28). Part of this facade is the “setting” (p. 29). These are the scenic elements that are part of the background but is also important, as he argues that no performance can take place before an individual has taken part of the setting for his role (p. 29). The facade also includes personal elements, wherein Goffman ascribes details of the performance such as clothes or sex that he argues play a part in establishing empathy between the acting individual and his audience (p. 30).

His dramaturgical idea of self-presentation is not limited to single individuals, Goffman (2014) also provides not only his view on groups or “teams” as he calls them (p. 73) but also an explanation of how they should be viewed. On the idea of teams, Goffman is fairly specific calling it

[...] A group of individuals who must perform an intimate cooperation to maintain a projected definition of the situation. A team is a group, but not a group in relation to a social structure or social organization but rather in relation to an interaction or a series of interactions during which the relevant definition of the projection is maintained (p. 95).

Goffman (2014) also provides his ideas for what he calls “region” and “regional behavior”, which he defines as places that have some degree of limitation to perception but are areas with a time or space limitation (p. 97). He argues that while these limitations may vary in degree, it plays a big part in understanding the differences in the performance based on specific areas rather than only the setting (p. 97). In this argument, he explains that there are two different regions, one front- and back region (p. 97) or as others call it: a front stage and backstage (Hogan, 2010, p. 378). The front region according to Goffman is the one where the performance takes place (p. 97) while the back region is where the planning for the performance is done (p. 102).

## 2.2 Political participation

While not as well established as Goffman’s dramaturgical work, Alessandro Pizzorno (1970) still provides well-explained ideas on what should be included in a political participation theory. To him, “[...] political participation is not only interesting scientifically because it can function as a mechanism for consensus or integration. Rather, [...], political participation is a way to fight against political inequalities of a certain society” (p. 31). For this study, we viewed political participation as the main part of the dramatic play, Pizzorno provided us with a basic and historic understanding for what can be considered as important while Goffman’s theory allowed us to discern the elements that were part of the actor's performance in order to provide details for the participation itself.

In Pizzorno's (1970) argument for political participation, he relies on the work of Lester Milbrath and establishes a list that is sorted into 13 degrees in which to determine how much an individual is participating in politics. He also argues that the list is comprised of how "sociologists and political scientists tend to define political participation." (p. 31) . While Pizzorno critiques some elements of the list as having more significance in the context of the American election culture, he also defends its potential use with the argument that there exist some cultural variations in other nations (p. 31). The thirteen degrees sorted into descending order are:

Holding a public or party office, being a candidate for office, attending a caucus or a strategy meeting, becoming an active member in a political party, contributing time in a political campaign, attending a political meeting or rally, making a monetary contribution to a party or campaign, contacting a public official or a political leader, wearing a button or putting a sticker on the car, attempting to talk another into voting a certain way, initiating a political discussion, voting, and exposing oneself to political stimuli (Pizzorno, 1970, p. 29-31).

Pizzorno (1970) argues that in order to understand political participation one must also understand the historical evolution of the notion itself (p. 31-32). For example, while Sweden 2019 is a representative democracy where all citizens can enjoy the right to vote, this has not always been true. Women's right to vote in Sweden is barely 100-year-old and the last changes that made voting a full legal right to everyone were made in 1989 (Riksdagen, 2016).

Another key piece for Pizzorno's idea of political participation is the effects of class struggles. He argues that while egalitarian interests existed before the struggles (p. 33), it is because of the historical class struggles such as the bourgeois and the proletariat that the want for egalitarianism still exist in society and plays an important part in political participation (p. 38). He argues that "all parties, conservative, nationalist, socialist or communist share this need to base participation on a certain area of equality." (p. 43). This notion of equality is still visible in 2019 when viewing different Swedish political parties ideas of equality. For example, the socialist party Socialdemokraterna stands for male and female equality in all areas of life while the nationalist party Sverigedemokraterna focuses their idea of equality on solving problems that they argue affect women more than men (Socialdemokraterna, 2018; Sverigedemokraterna, 2019).

In his explanation, Pizzorno (1970) also argues that if one participates in an organization rather than through it, there are two potential problems that can arise for the notions of political participation: bureaucratization and political subculture (p. 35). In this case bureaucratization means "political action, which has as its only end the survival of the organizational apparatus as such (even if this means forgetting the original political ends)" (p. 35) while political subculture is explained as a want to belong on a grass-root or associative level instead of taking part (p. 35).

He also brings up an argument to understand those who do not follow the dominant norms of society. Pizzorno (1970) argues that those who follow this idea find themselves in a "contra society" and

must make themselves accepted into the larger society and conform to a certain degree to the dominant norms or isolate themselves from society (p. 56).

## 2.3 Previous research similar to our study

Hogan (2010) not only provides his own thoughts on the works of Erving Goffman but demonstrates how versatile it is by listing some of the researchers who have utilized his work for their own theories when investigating online media, ranging from works done in 1998 to 2010 (p. 379). This shows that the merits of Goffman's dramaturgical theory have been tested and found to be valuable.

While there exist numerous amounts of analysts and researchers that have provided valuable information regarding political communication on Twitter, and especially from America, there are only a few authors that have provided academically legitimate sources involving research on Twitter with context to Swedish politics. One of the authors that specialize in the subject of Swedish political communication, Jesper Strömbäck, was of great value for this study with his research in the book: *Power, Media, and Society* from 2014. In his work, he thoroughly discusses the historical developments and differences between traditional media and modern media digitization and the impact it has had on politicians, journalists, citizens, and society as a whole. Strömbäck (2014) argues that we as citizens need media that can review various decision-makers so that the power in Sweden does not get corrupted (p. 10), while similarly, politicians and other decision-makers also need media so that they can convey their opinions and information about different decisions and to know what effects these decisions have (p. 10).

Strömbäck (2014) also argues that "if a political party wishes to build a strong relation between them and their audience, you should not talk to the audience, - you have to talk with them" (p. 201-202). He also cites research done on social media by Karlsson et. al for political parties in Sweden that shows that there is a decrease in activity when the election is over, which in turn indicates that "social media are being used as a one-way communication channel for political parties rather than a tool for shaping long-term relationships with their audience" (p. 202). He argues that "this is despite the fact that social media has made it easier than ever before to build and maintain mutual relations with their audience" (p. 202). Additionally, he has published numerous independent and co-written articles about immigration that occasionally revolves around digital media and communication. One of his co-written articles is a discourse analysis on how immigration is represented in media coverage conducted by Eberl et. al (2018). In their study, they discovered that the discourse is diverse, but when presented in the media, the immigrants are often framed as either "economic, cultural, or criminal threats and thus covered in a highly unfavorable way" (p. 11). They argue that when an audience is repeatedly exposed to these negative portrayals, the effects may appear later and could possibly affect their voting behavior (p. 11).

Another researcher who has done similar research to ours is Anders Olof Larsson who has utilized the same methods but not theories and in some research has also performed some studies on the political

communication that occurs on Twitter. From his earlier works, Larsson and Moe (2013) did a network- and discursive analysis on the 2011 Danish election. They argue that research on the web 2.0 should be past the “[...] pioneering phase of studies dominated by speculation and fragmentation” (p. 2) and that their goal with the study was to try and introduce different established theories of democracy to social media platforms (p. 2). The goal of their study was not “to test the normative potential of deliberative democratic theory” but instead investigate a singular area of communication within the public sphere (p. 75). In later works, Larsson and Svensson (2016) performed a network analysis with the aim to find out how Swedish politicians use the platform. While the study has a research question that is aimed to the “ordinary people” (p. 4), the overall focus is on examining strategic elements behind politicians use of social media (p. 3).

In his independent work, Larsson (2017) conducted a comparative analysis on hashtags with two social media platforms, Twitter and Instagram during the Norwegian 2015 election. The goal of the study was to “provide novel insight into regarding use across more than one platform. Are the most active users and most recurring themes different or similar across Twitter and Instagram?” (p. 2). The themes in this study were determined by hashtags, some with a general sentiment such as “go vote” and others more specific such as “asthma allergy” (p. 6-7). The results of this study showed that smaller parties were more successful in gathering support on Twitter while the larger had more success on Instagram (p. 1). This also supports his argument in earlier work that Twitter is more active in favor of underdog parties in the context of Norwegian election culture (p.3) while at the same stating that the results are similar to his studies on the 2014 Swedish election (p. 5).

## 2.4 Applications for this study

As this study utilizes a mixed-method approach, there are some differences in how we utilize the two theories. In some cases, the two theories are combined and in others, they serve separate functions depending on the method.

Goffman’s dramaturgical theory is the one this study relies on the most as it has been thoroughly tested and used previously on digital media for different research (Hogan, 2010) and we argue that it is flexible enough to be combined with Pizzorno’s ideas of political participation. The most problematic part for this study’s approach to Goffman’s transmitted and transferred expressions is that on Twitter in contrast to a regular conversation and the real life, there are not necessarily any activities outside of the hashtag where we can observe the transferred expression. Without any real way of eliminating this problem, we only focused on the transmitted expression when using the secondary method. Additionally, in the network analysis, we apply Goffman’s (2014) argument for personal facade when examining user profiles and profile images. For example, a profile may use a political party’s symbol as their own profile image which would then indicate sympathy towards the party and the user would in turn also have a higher degree of participation when going by Pizzorno’s list.

Following Goffman's own explicit explanation of teams, the only way to determine whether or not people form teams in the interactions is by examining how the discourse is changed when multiple individuals argue with one another or against someone.

The setting, in this study, is the hashtag itself (#Migpol), as Goffman (2014) explains that a setting in some way or another determines how acting individuals perform (p. 29). For example, by including the hashtag in a message would indicate that the message itself is political and in this case should have political content relating to migration politics. When the setting is combined with the degrees of political participation from Pizzorno (1970), we are able to determine how the actors participate in political content and determine which degree of participation it is. For example, some might try to initiate a political conversation, others try to sway opinion, and some might just be making their voices heard all of which are different degrees of participation according to Pizzorno.

In this study, we were also aware that there are politicians who have Twitter accounts who may also use the hashtag to broadcast a message, but this does not mean that they were automatically assigned the highest degree. This is because of the fact that politicians may use the hashtag to only spread a message but not partake in any discussion that occurs from it. We would argue that this indicates that it is a case of image management as argued by Strömbäck (2014) and is nothing but a token show of active participation in political matters, rather than actual participation.

For this study we reworked the list we found in Pizzorno's work as there were some changes necessary in order to make it applicable in a social media context. Instead of his original 13 degrees, the list was scaled down to 7 that are usable to measure degrees of political participation: Holding a public or party office, being a candidate for office, contributing time in a political campaign, contacting a public official or a political leader, wearing a button or putting a sticker on the car, attempting to talk another into voting a certain way, and initiating a political discussion. However, as Pizzorno's work was done in 1970, a time before the internet was invented, we also added five points: "exposing others to political stimuli", "interacting with a political party", "participating in a political discussion", "interacting with a politician", and "making their voice heard".

The reasons for adding these five points were not only because of the fact that the original list is more accurate for more traditional ways of communication and participation. They were added as we began working with the collected material only to realize that the original list could not accurately portray certain kinds of interactions or activities that are natural in a digital media setting. For example, creating a tweet but gaining no response or doing an @mention inside a Twitter thread to actors not previously present. Another example is the fact that social media platforms present an opportunity to interact with any politician from any party that is available on the platform, and not only political leaders.

In addition to these changes, we also changed the terminology used when the list was applicable, instead of degrees they are called "level of participation" and it is because of degrees being a word that is also used in the network analysis method. Similarly, instead of "contacting a public official", "wearing a

button or putting a sticker on the car”, and “contributing time in a political campaign” we are changing it to “interacting with a public official or a political leader”, “Using party related imagery for the profile or showing sympathy (text form, emoji or imagery) on the account page” and “sharing content from a political campaign”. These changes were made in order to better reflect the nature of participation that is available on Twitter and similar platforms. The new list of levels of political participation in descending order is as presented in table 1 below.

*Table 1 - Our reworked list from Pizzorno 1970 that is used during this study*

(12) Holding a public or party office	(6) interacting with a political party
(11) being a candidate for office	(5) attempting to talk another into voting a certain way
(10) sharing content from a political campaign	(4) participating in a political discussion
(9) interacting with a public official or a political leader	(3) initiating a political discussion
(8) interacting with a politician	(2) exposing others to political stimuli
(7) using party related imagery for the profile or showing sympathy (written, emoji or imagery) on the account page	(1) making your voice heard

For this study, we applied Pizzorno’s (1970) argument on political subculture and bureaucratization with the secondary method in order to try and discern whether or not parts of the discourse shows any signs of either. For example, while individuals may have discussed a political party they might have done so in the sense of “how it used to be in society”, “the party should focus on x” or perhaps show some vagueness in their sympathies “I like the party but”.

While Pizzorno (1970) puts emphasis on the importance of the class struggles for the evolution of political participation (p. 31), this is not necessarily applicable to social media. This is because of how accounts are created and maintained on social media platforms, the notions of class becomes less relevant as there are no benefits or drawbacks as all accounts are essentially created equal. The more appropriate distinctions for accounts found on social media are instead organizational, individual, commercial or non-commercial. These distinctions are used for the roles in the network analysis.

## 2.5 Critical discussion on political participation

While Larsson and Moe (2013) stated that research for political participation on online media should be “past the pioneering phase of speculation [...]” (p. 2) a statement we do not believe to be true. There are several factors that became evident in later research to consider that Larsson and Moe (2013) do not bring up in their study such as the fact that participation on social media can be limited by governmental agendas (Gillespie, 2017, p. 259-260), that they are privately owned platforms without legislature (Gillespie, 2017, p.258), and the actual age of users on social media platforms. The last point perhaps being the most concerning as social media attracts an audience that consists of young people who can partake in information and participate in discussions but not actually vote (age required in Sweden is 18). For example, Twitter does not provide any way of viewing the age of any particular user without asking them but allows for anyone age 13 or above to sign up for an account (Twitter, 2018a), this also means that there is no way to tell from the outside whether or not the person is 13 or 30.

However, while our study does not regard these factors either they play a part of why we disagree with Larsson and Moe (2013) and why we would choose to utilize ideas that could be viewed as outdated. It is with inspiration from Kennedy (2016) who argued that instead of investigating the details found in data, the focus of past studies using data has suffered from a positivistic outlook that more data will yield better results (p.83-84). In interviews she conducted with employees of companies who handle large amounts of data she found that there is a focus on quantity and not necessarily quality to the point of fetishism (p. 145;149). Following this argument, Pizzorno’s modified list presents us with an opportunity to steer away from the dominant forms of quantitative understanding and focus more on the details that we can derive from the collected material. However, there are surely nuances that we fail to understand, address or might not even be visible to us because of our lack of education within politics. Similarly, our education within communication, data, and digital media could also provide nuances missing from previous research or provide a new way to understand existing research.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this study is to understand that there is no way to understand everything, least of all using social media data without input from those that generated it. This is a poignant thought brought forward by participants in Kennedy’s (2016) research who stated, “you never have all of the data; you’re just capturing a moment in time” (p. 149). At the same time, another participant gave the process some diligence by stating “[...] social media insight are a ‘finger in the wind’.” (p. 149) meaning that there is some knowledge that can be gained.

## 3 Methods

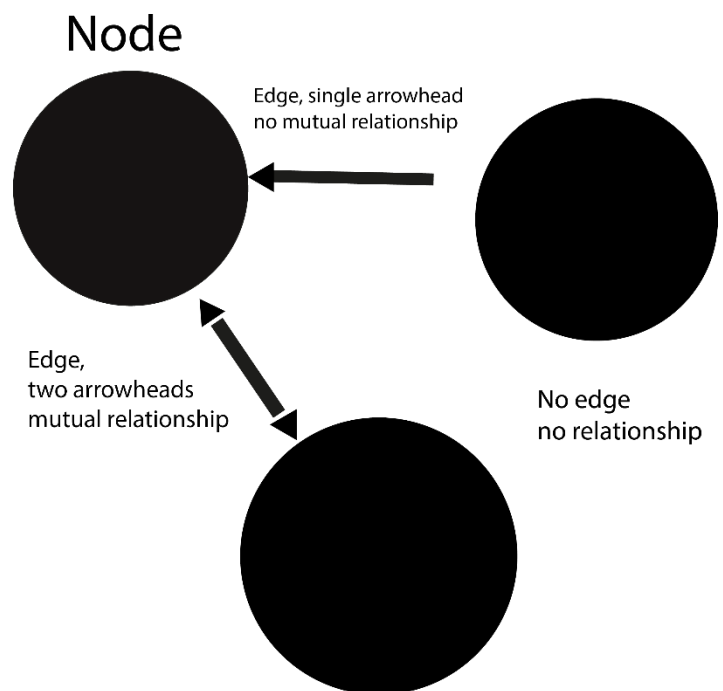
*In this chapter, we present and explain our methods for this study, network- and a secondary method inspired by discourse analysis. Also included are how we selected the data for each method, what software and settings we used, our thoughts on the study’s validity, reliability and generalizability, a discussion on our sample and the total population and ending on the ethics that guided us during this study.*

### 3.1 Social network analysis

Whereas traditional methods that have a quantitative aim commonly focuses on using statistics, a network analysis consists of investigating the relationship between different points of interest (Scott, 2017). This is what makes the method the most suitable for our study, as we were interested in investigating the different ways that a relationship can be established by user interaction on Twitter (Scott, 2017, p. 4).

The tools that are provided and integral to performing a network analysis can be surmised as nodes, edges, direction, weight, and centrality (Golbeck, 2013, p. 10-12). The goal of performing a network analysis is to use these tools in order to create and visualize a graph that consists of relational data, wherein nodes are the points of interest and edges are used to explain the relationship between them (Golbeck, 2013, p. 10). The direction of a network is visible by the edges between the nodes, of which there are two mutually exclusive explanations: it can be either directed or undirected (Golbeck, 2013, p. 10). A directed network means that the nodes inside of a network that has a relationship with another node are not necessarily reciprocated, this is made visible by having arrows that show which nodes have a mutual relationship with each other (Golbeck, 2013, p. 10). An undirected network is the opposite, which means that the nodes inside the network that have a relationship are always mutual (Golbeck, 2013, p. 10). Weight is a numerical value assigned to the edges in the network which adds a “thickness” to the lines between nodes. This can be used for example to highlight how many times a person has been mentioned in an ongoing thread or used as a way to separate similar types of interaction by placing a higher value on one kind of interaction (Golbeck, 2013, p. 10;12). An example of nodes, edges and how direction is visualized can be seen in figure 1.

While the term “centrality” itself is somewhat self-explanatory as it denominates something being central, network analysis uses this term in a slightly different manner. For network analysis, centrality is in part dependent on what you are looking for. The definitions and concepts for centrality can be used for example to explain how some nodes in the network may act as “[...] intermediaries, mediating the demands and influence of the other members of their network.” (Scott, 2017, p. 96). One such concept is the “betweenness centrality” which can be used to determine who inside the network is the most important for information transmission (Golbeck, 2013, p. 37).



*Figure 1 - Example network*

Other key features for visualizing the network are the size and color coding (Golbeck, 2013, p. 54). While they are not necessarily integral, as you can still perform the network analysis and visualize the graph without having either color codes or size variations, if used correctly they can provide an additional layer of clarity.

### 3.1.1 Approach to creating roles

When creating the roles for the network, we are using the explanation of Burt's sample procedure as explained by Scott (2017) (discussed more in 3.4). This way of assigning roles required that we investigated user profiles and allowed us to assign roles based on identifiable social characteristics such as nationality or work profession. These roles were then represented as the nodes in our network, each node representing either an individual or an organization of some kind and in turn, allowed us to answer research question 1.

### 3.1.2 Roles for the network analysis

These are the roles that we created for the different actors that appeared in our data collection, the names are in bold on the left-hand side and the criteria we used to assign the actors to it are on the right-hand side.

**Politician** - Accounts belonging to persons who were publicly elected before the election in 2018 or were an acting replacement for a publicly elected politician or ran in the Riksdag election of 2018.

**Journalist** - Accounts belonging to persons who write their profession and could be verified as working in the journalistic profession in established and verifiable news organizations. This role included both freelance and employed journalists.

**Public individual** - Accounts belonging to persons who in some form seeks to take a more visible role in society. This included mainstream celebrities from the entertainment industry, authors with a published book, blogs open to the public with their name and picture or former publicly elected politicians.

**Private individual** - Accounts belonging to persons who could be identified but had no verifiable connection to the journalistic or political profession. This role also excluded those with the traits explained in the public individual role.

**Alternative media** - Accounts that presented themselves as news organizations but in comparison to traditional news have an explicit focus on ethnicity, religion or similar.

**Political organization** - Accounts that belonged to organizations devoted to politics. This included both the youth parties and the support organizations of political parties who took part in the 2018 election.

**Anonymous individual** - These are the accounts that either did not have some form of identifiable attributes such as name or picture or if we believed that it may have been an alias. As we were unable to verify the latter, they were assigned this role instead.

**Governmental organization** - Accounts belonged to verifiable governmental organizations of a country.

**Public service organization** - Accounts that belonged to the public service of a country.

**Commercial media organization** - These are accounts that worked in one of four areas of media; radio, television, print / online news or online media with a commercial goal.

**Non-governmental organization** – Accounts that belonged to organizations without a commercial goal and acting outside of the government such as unions, aid organizations or similar. This role, however, excluded organizations that work in the media industry such as public service.

**Other** - These are accounts that we were unable to assign to the other roles, which means that they had no identifiable attribute.

### 3.1.3 Methodological application for this study

In this study, edges are colored separately from nodes as a way to differentiate interaction between actors following the modified list from Pizzorno which also showed what level of participation they had.

Instead of having a weight assigned, they were given a type of either “reply” or “mention”. This fulfilled a similar role to the weight function, as it thickened the lines where they were most heavily used. However, it was not possible to show a distinction between the interactions if there were more than one of these types present for the edge as it was combined into a single line. While the edges are an essential part of the network analysis method, it was by seeing how they spread out that allowed us to understand which actor has a much greater interaction with others and answer research question 1b.

The direction of this network was directed as it was entirely based on user interaction, therefore it was important to show which nodes shared a relationship and whether or not that relationship was mutual. This not only plays a part in calculating centrality values but also allowed us to see where the interactions were mutual and where they were not.

For centrality, we would argue that the best way to calculate centrality for this study was to utilize the betweenness centrality value. While degree centrality was also a possibility considering that it was a network based on interaction and each edge brought a degree to a node (Scott, 2017 p. 97) it was not necessarily a good measurement for this study. This is because of how uneven the distribution of degrees can be and as Scott (2017) argues that it is better used for local centrality rather than trying to calculate overall centrality (p. 97). In comparison, the concept of betweenness centrality and its function was more appropriate to us as we wanted to try and ascertain if some actors were more important for the discourse. Understanding these actors and how they may have played a part in shaping the discourse of #Migpol could possibly provide a greater insight should the study be applied to a greater population. This is following Golbeck’s (2013) argument that the concept of betweenness centrality is good for figuring out which nodes play a key role in information transmission (p. 37) and would allow us to answer research question 1a.

We also utilized the density measurement, which is a measure on how well connected the nodes in the network are to one another, where max value is 1 but is always less dense in directed networks (Scott, 2017). For this study, as it was based on interactions and focused on a single day, it could provide an

additional layer of understanding of how much the actors connected with each other during the course of the day.

### 3.2 Secondary method

While it is difficult to motivate the interactions between actors that are initially analyzed by the network analysis we would argue that by including a secondary method, we will be able to research and present additional in-depth information that would not be possible only utilizing the network analysis. This is considering the fact that the network is constructed from interaction and communication and we wanted to investigate how actors present their opinions in their tweets and found inspiration for this method when reading about ideas that are commonly associated with the more common approaches to discourse analysis method in the works of Gee (1999), Boréus (2015), and Winther Jørgensen and Philips (2000). Winther Jørgensen and Philips (2000) argue that the notion of discourse analysis become relatively ambiguous due to it being applied in different meanings in different contexts (p. 7). They continue this argument by stating that it has led to the idea that discourse analysis does not necessarily have a single approach but can instead offer multiple approaches both interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary that can be applied to different social areas and research (p. 7). Gee (1999) also describes the more common ways of performing a discourse analysis method is often by analyzing the language and the linguistic structure (p.10), and Boréus (2015) describes it as analyzing how common traits are formed and made visible by text analysis. In comparison to this, the focus of our secondary method is not on the specifics of what actors have said but rather it focuses on the opinions of their perceived reality and how they position themselves in the discourse.

We also found some inspiration from a version of discourse analysis described by both Boréus (2015) and Winther Jørgensen and Philips (2000) called discourse psychology. This version is according to Boréus (2015) associated with Margaret Wetherell and Jonathan Potter who in their studies performed interviews with natives in New Zealand with British ancestors and focused on racist discourse. When describing this method Boréus (2015) also state that Wetherell and Potter argued that “discourses actively creates social and psychological processes. Individuality, social groups, and social categories are constructed and spoken through discourses.” (p. 180). Winther Jørgensen and Philips (2000) also state that discourse psychology looks at texts and language as “constructions of the world that orients towards social action.” (p. 97). To us, this was telling of the potential information that could be revealed by using our secondary method to complement the network analysis as we see political participation as the highest form of social action required to bring about change in society.

We also found some inspiration in Boréus (2015) own interpretation of a Foucault-inspired subject positioning, in which she claims that it “[...] offers real people opportunities for action and limitations for actions [...]” (p. 182) but then goes on to say that the term idea of subject positioning is open for interpretation other than the one she presents (p. 182). She argues that Foucault was not only interested in

the written word but also in which social context they appear in (p. 177). She continues by arguing that discourse analysis in social sciences draw inspiration from Foucault and his work, explaining that they are “extensive, complicated and multifaceted and can, therefore, inspire research of different kinds” (p. 178).

### **3.2.1 Methodological application for this study**

For this study, we utilized suggestions for performing a discourse analysis found in both Boréus (2015) and Winther Jørgensen and Philips (2000), some of which are geared towards discourse psychology, but we still found them applicable for our method as well.

Our method was entirely observational, and we had no contact with the actors inside the network. This means that any material we collected was what Winther Jørgensen and Philips (2000) define as “naturally occurring material” (p. 117). They argue that naturally occurring material is beneficial for research because of the risk that the researcher having any kind of effect on the material will be minimized (p. 117).

In order for us to find an answer to research question 2, we examined each tweet containing #Migpol that was published during the 8th of September. This was inspired by Winther Jørgensen and Philips (2000), as in one of their suggestions for discourse psychologists, they argue about the importance to investigate how content is constituted in the discourse (p. 116). Additionally, as this study also had the advantage that all data were digitally stored and accessed, it also meant that we had the ability to utilize digital tools in order to visualize this as Boréus (2015) suggests. For this study, we utilized NVivo, a software that is designed for qualitative research that allows you to produce multiple different data visualizations (Bazeley, 2007). We made use of the “Word Cloud” (or “tag cloud”) tool in order to create a representation of the most frequently used words, and just as the name indicates, is a tool that gathers all the words from a selected data set and generates a visualized cloud that displays the most used words and sorts them into sizes, with the most common being the largest whilst simultaneously gravitating the words towards the middle. Some Swedish words, such as “och, men, till” (and, but, for) were removed when generating this visualization as words such as these are regarded as “clutter” (Bazeley, 2007, p. 112) and is recommended to be removed, especially as these conditional words do not serve any purpose for our study. The word cloud will also be accompanied by examples that we see are representative of the different topics as suggested by Winther Jørgensen and Philips (2000) on how qualitative research should be presented for transparency (p. 123). Additionally, in our Foucault inspired subject positioning, we also found inspiration in Winther Jørgensen and Philips (2000) suggestion on using pronouns as part of the subject position (p. 122). In this study, we examined how actors used Swedish subject pronouns “jag”, “vi”, “dom”, and “du” (I, we, they and you in singular form) in their tweets in order to view how they positioned themselves in relation to their message. We chose these four pronouns with inspiration from the quote by Wetherell and Potter found in Boréus (2015) as these are the ones who would have the highest indication of whether or not the actors speak from individual belief or from a collective belief.

When analyzing the subject positions, this study examined actors messages by looking for expressions that are transmitted as explained by Goffman, 2014. This allowed us to find answers to what the message the users are trying to transmit is and the actors own relation to the message. While doing so, we also simultaneously examined the potentially emerging “teams” and “settings” (Goffman, 2014. Analyzing the transmitted expression also allowed us to find expressions that fit Pizzorno’s (1970) idea of political subculture.

In order to find the answer for the research question 2a, we compared and analyzed tweets from actors who received the highest centrality value and tweets from actors who received the lowest value possible.

According to Goffman (2014), a team is a co-operation where the team members maintain a set of agreed-upon standards. As previously cited in this study, “It is a collection of individuals who performs an intimate co-operation in order to preserve a given projected definition of the situation” (p. 95), meaning that, a team-member among the users on Twitter that sympathizes with the user and his expressed message might appear, which in turn creates a performance of cooperation. In later research utilizing Goffman’s theory of “teams”, Dell (2016) explains the argument by stating that it occurs as individuals in social interaction “[...] rely on each other and need to cooperate to maintain a similar definition of the situation.” (p, 574). In this study, it was highly possible that teams would be separable regarding the question of immigration, by either agreeing or disagreeing with the question at hand.

As Boréus (2015) and Winther Jørgensen and Philips (2000) explain that discourse analysis regards texts that appear in a social context, in this study the hashtag served this function. We would argue that when a user employs a hashtag in their tweets, they make it clear that they are inserting their tweet into a certain context. We also regarded the hashtag as part of Goffman’s (2014) theory on settings as it could contain political content relating to migration politics. However, there could also be the possibility that we would find examples of tweets that did not directly relate to this particular type of politics. This is because of the fact that users are not limited to including only a single hashtag in a tweet, so there was a possibility that users included additional hashtags for a variety of reasons. It could, however, indicate that they might want to express themselves in a multitude of settings in order to ensure that their tweets will reach the largest possible audience, and to address various overlapping constituencies (Bruns & Burgess, 2011). Also, when including #Migpol in their tweets, they might not even talk about migration in their tweet at all as their conversations with other users might derail completely and talk about something very different than what the hashtag originally suggests. The purpose of the hashtag function, according to Zappavigna (2012), is something that actively invites connections with a wider audience to “label the meanings they express” (p. 1). It can also be referred to as a form of “discourse tagging” (p.1) that indicates that hashtags are being placed into something that she refers to as “searchable talk” (p.1) so that it can be found by others. Bruns and Hallvard (2014) also argue that it signals that you wish to partake in the discourse that the subject of the

hashtag revolves around and that you are potentially interested in the wider communicative process that other users also participate in (p. 18).

### 3.3 Data collection

The data for this study was collected manually by the authors of this study after suffering from failures when using automated software which could only retrieve those who had published a tweet containing the hashtag but not those that had replied (discussed more in 5.2).

When collecting the data, it was done by first retrieving those who utilized the hashtag with the software Mecodify, which provided us with a list of tweets. From this list, we then retrieved the replies that tweet had received and then input the data into two separate excel sheets as required in order to proceed with the network visualization, one for nodes and one for edges. The time frame for data collection was from 00:00 AM to 23:59 PM on September 8th, in order to be as close to 24 hours before election day as possible. It was also done in order to have as much data as possible for our study.

### 3.4 Sample and total population

When it comes to the total number of tweets done during the election year, we are unable to give an accurate number of the total population of users utilizing the hashtag Migpol due to limitations in software and access to the Twitter API. Despite this, we could still draw some conclusions based on our attempts to gather data.

The data collected with Mecodify returned close to 7 500 tweets containing the hashtag using our original time period of 8th of August to 8th of September 2018. In a study conducted by Jarynowski and Rostami (2013) on how individuals on Twitter were discussing the riots in Stockholm 2013 over the course of two months (p. 1). Their study was on 8 000 tweets with more than one hashtag and found that Migpol was used in every tweet that they had included (p.1;2). This shows that the hashtag is still somewhat popular in terms of use even outside of election years. While their study was performed over a significantly longer time period than ours, we estimate that the number of tweets made during the election year is well over 10 000 as it has an established history of use and it was close this number in only the last month.

This also shows us that our sample size of the total population is far too small for the results to be generalizable, as we only have 489 individuals and 328 tweets containing the hashtag in this study. However, Scott (2017) argues that when performing a network analysis, small samples may be preferable to use when the object of analysis is a large-scale social interaction. He also argues at the same time that this can be problematic as there may be a loss of valuable data (p. 51;52). He argues that one of the reasons for the preference of small samples is the resources required when working with a large population and that any attempts to analyze the material can prove to be difficult (p. 51). While the ideal sample procedure according to Scott would be a “complex system of social relations of all types that make up the total network” (p. 51),

wherein the social relations may be economical, religious or similar. This system would, in theory, allow the identification of partial networks that can still in some form be generalized to the total population (p. 51). He does, however, provide another alternative done by Ronald Stuart Burt who advocated for the use of “the more qualitative features of social networks” (p. 54). Scott explains that Burt tried to resolve the issues of sampling by identifying social attributes and applying roles for agents based on these attributes (actors in this study) to identify how their position in the network may affect how they interact with one another (p. 54).

For this study, we utilized Burt’s approach to sampling because of the fact that we were focusing on the interaction data generated by @mentions and @replies which is not a complex relationship necessary for Scott’s sampling method. Burt’s approach was also more suitable as it required us to become acquainted with the data material and allowed us to identify social attributes which we used to assign roles to the actors in the network. This process would also, in theory, allow us to find partial networks with relational data and roles that may be generalizable when applied to a much larger data set.

The sampling for the secondary method, however, is reliant on our network data, therefore we do not believe that the results from this method are generalizable. Generalizability for the secondary method is difficult to achieve as we have a very short time frame for data collection and the discourse for this day may have been affected by factors outside of the time frame for data collection, such as Almedalsveckan. This is a Swedish tradition taking place from June to July and is an annual public and political gathering where politicians openly discuss and argue with one another on different political issues in a public setting. Performance in this public setting may have some effect on how the discourse may change either in favor or against the politicians on social media. These effects are not necessarily visible to us unless actors specifically point it out as our study is done after it has already occurred without a comparative aspect.

When performing the analysis with our secondary method and deciding the sample size, we extracted a small number of examples from the tweets posted by actors with the highest amount of centrality within the network and compared them to actors that have a smaller amount of centrality. The examples are based out of interest to the research questions which seeks to the difference in discourse related to centrality value and the actors positioning in the most dominant topics.

One of the greatest challenges when analyzing Twitter data according to Einspänner, Dang-Anh, and Thimm (2014), is when you have to “choose a sample that is appropriate to answer a research question” (p. 99). While we were aware that it is difficult to collect an exhaustive sample that presents a true and consistent result of the hashtag for the secondary method and especially for just one day, we adjusted our research questions accordingly to this limitation, which had an effect on the proportion of our data sample for the secondary method.

Another challenge for the secondary method is potentially unbeknownst events that could affect the sociocultural and thematic discussions in the discourse. For example, there could have been some minor scandal involving politicians in a municipality whose citizens are actively tweeting about the matter in the

hashtag which may have attracted a large amount of attention from other Swedish users. Gaffney and Puschmann (2014) argues that it is always preferable to collect data for a prolonged period of time if possible because of events and unusually highly active users that could skew the representativeness of the sample that might appear at any given time of the day (p. 57). This is one of the risks we took when limiting our research for only one single day. Nonetheless, we still aimed to achieve a lucid and transparent perspective over the material as much as possible. Work made by researchers such as Rambukkana (2015) argued in his conclusion that when looking at 1877 tweets for cases of digital activism at #CISPA (Cyber Intelligence Sharing and Protection Act) by using a content- and discourse analysis that their sample only represents a small portion of the tweets, and that “the findings should be treated as indicative of potential trends” (p. 149). By extending the reflection of his results, we were able to apply the same justification of sampling for the validity of our own study.

### **3.4.1 Validity**

We have judged that the validity of this study is relatively high as the study utilizes two theories together with two methods that differ from previous research and are able to create a more nuanced understanding of Swedish political participation on Twitter. While similar research has examined strategic elements of politicians and how politicians use Twitter, this study focuses instead on how the Swedish public participates in political content which is an area in need of research.

For our choice of methods, network analysis is more than able to show and grant insight in how people create relationships but is unable to answer matters of what people may talk about in that relationship or on a much larger scale. Therefore, we decided to mitigate this by combining it with the secondary method with inspiration from discourse analysis in order to understand and provide insight into how people who have a relationship speak to one another and in a much larger context.

Goffman’s dramaturgical theory is a theory has been utilized in a varied amount of ways to understand how a social encounter may be interpreted but the theory itself does not provide a quantitative measurement in which we can gauge participation. The benefit of Goffman’s theory is that is versatile enough to be able to mix with other theories or ideas and Pizzorno’s ideas on political participation are well founded and easy to understand without an education within politics. However, there are two important things that we have to consider as having an effect on validity.

First, this is a retrospective study meaning that we were studying how it looked after the event had taken place. Second, there is an inherent problem when analyzing social media data as Wasserman and Faust (1994) points out: data may change over time. This in combination with the first issue means that while we may have seen one type of actor being dominant which may not be true had the study taken place during the election. Similarly, anyone attempting to redo our study may find different results at a later time as users may delete their tweets, accounts, change profile picture, etc.

Sadly, there are no concrete solutions to this issue as there is no way to save a particular data set indefinitely nor a guarantee that the platform itself will exist for all time. However, we have tried to mitigate this issue by trying to make sure that our variables for roles, the modified Pizzorno list, and an explanation on how we applied the theories on the methods are as clear as possible in order to be applicable to a similar but not duplicate data set.

### **3.4.2 Reliability**

While we encountered issues with software and legal limitations (discussed further in 5.2) in this study, we judged that the reliability of this study is still fairly high as we have been transparent in how to perform a similar study.

For our variables, we utilized an established sample method as explained by Scott (2017). The secondary method utilized suggestions from research on a method that would yield similar results. However, when presenting results for the secondary method there was an inherent issue as we paraphrased our examples (detailed why in 3.5). We have tried to mitigate this by presenting the English examples and providing the Swedish equivalent in appendix 1 in order to present our results as transparent as possible.

In regard to the software issues, future research should aim to find more reliable tools for data collection which presents another issue as Twitter only allows developers to access their API following the Cambridge Analytica scandal.

## **3.5 Research ethics for this study**

For this study, we have not only followed the research ethics established by Vetenskapsrådet but also Swedish constitutional law and European laws for data protection.

Vetenskapsrådet have created five ethical principles that a study containing people should follow: Information, Consent, Confidentiality, and Usage (Vetenskapsrådet, 2002). These principles can be surmised in short as the following: the researcher should inform people that they are being studied, the researcher should get their consent to being part of the study, the integrity of subjects who are part of the research must be protected above everything else and the collected information must only be used for whatever purpose the study set out to achieve.

However, as we are only using data that is publicly available, we have also judged our ethical approach in accordance with Twitter's privacy statement where they state that

Twitter is public and Tweets are immediately viewable and searchable by anyone around the world. We give you non-public ways to communicate on Twitter too, through protected Tweets and Direct Messages. You can also use Twitter under a pseudonym if you prefer not to use your name. (Twitter, 2018b)

From this statement, we decided to not follow Vetenskapsrådets information and consent principles as Twitter makes it clear that the data is publicly available and offers alternatives if a user does not want their activity to be public. This meant that any data used must be available to the public, i.e. we chose to not include any data from a person whose profile is set to private or ask to follow them in order to view their activity. Instead, we chose to emphasize the confidentiality principle by trying to make sure that the data used is as anonymized as possible in order to avoid identification, if we are unable to anonymize it properly we will avoid using the data. A cipher to this anonymization was kept by the authors until a passing grade had been achieved after which the cipher and other data was deleted in order to create total anonymization. Any data collected was only used for this study as dictated by the usage principle.

In addition to the principles that we followed, there is also a specific and incredibly important part of the Swedish constitutional law that we adhered to as it affected how we presented our results. The law specifically prohibits anyone to create a public registry of opinions based on Swedish citizens political views without their permission (SFS, 1974:152, § 3). There are also sections of the European law, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that we had to adhere to as well as it has been adopted by all members of the European Union and is designed to protect the member states citizens. In GDPR, article 89 outlines that the minimum requirements of research that utilizes data from individuals have to be done with the interest of protecting those that are considered as a subject of the research (Eur-Lex, 2016).

The principles and laws, therefore, led us to present results as following: for the visualization part of the network analysis we would not present any individual as having specific political view or sympathy and instead we focused on their interactions. In the presentation for the secondary method, which focused on individuals, we refrained from quoting specific tweets and instead paraphrased to the best of our abilities in order to avoid any data being misconstrued. We still attempted to retain the core of what users may have wanted to bring forward, such as their specific use of a pronoun to indicate something greater. While we were aware that all the data we used is public and can be found easily, our intention was that it should not be done via this study.

## **4 Results, analysis, and discussion**

*This chapter begins with an explanation of the software and settings we used to create our visualization of the network for #Migpol and then the results that we found using our two methods. It also contains our analysis and discussion for these results.*

### **4.1 Software and settings used**

In order to create the visualization of the network, we relied on Gephi which is free software with the specific purpose of creating network visualizations. The software offers all other necessary tools in order to perform a network analysis such as being able to automatically calculate centrality or degree measures while also giving users control over the color and size of nodes and edges (Khokhar, 2015).

Gephi offers a range of layouts that utilize preconstructed algorithms which utilizes what is called “force-direction” to generate visualizations based on user input and the structure of the network (Khokhar, 2015). From the network structure, a force directed algorithm creates the visualization from immaterial values of the in- and out degrees of the nodes. A node in a directed network with a high amount of in degree is called an “authority” while a node with a high amount of out-degree is called a “hub” (Khokhar, 2015). In our visualization, we used the Force Atlas layout which is best suited for small-world networks, where many nodes may not be neighbors but could still be reached by only a few jumps (Khokhar, 2015).

Apart from the standard settings, for this visualization, we included the options called “attraction distribution” and “adjust by sizes”. The first setting creates a much more sparse graph and places authorities in the center while pushing hubs away from the authorities. The second setting tries to ensure minimum overlap in nodes in order to ensure a visually pleasing graph without nodes being stacked on each other (Khokhar, 2015).

In addition to Gephi, we also utilized Adobe Illustrator in order to create a color legend for easy navigation, providing a reminder of how the network was constructed and additional information such as numbering clusters we found during our initial analysis. In order to create our more basic bar graphs, we utilized Tableau which is a software specialized for visualizing data but not networks in such details as Gephi was able to.

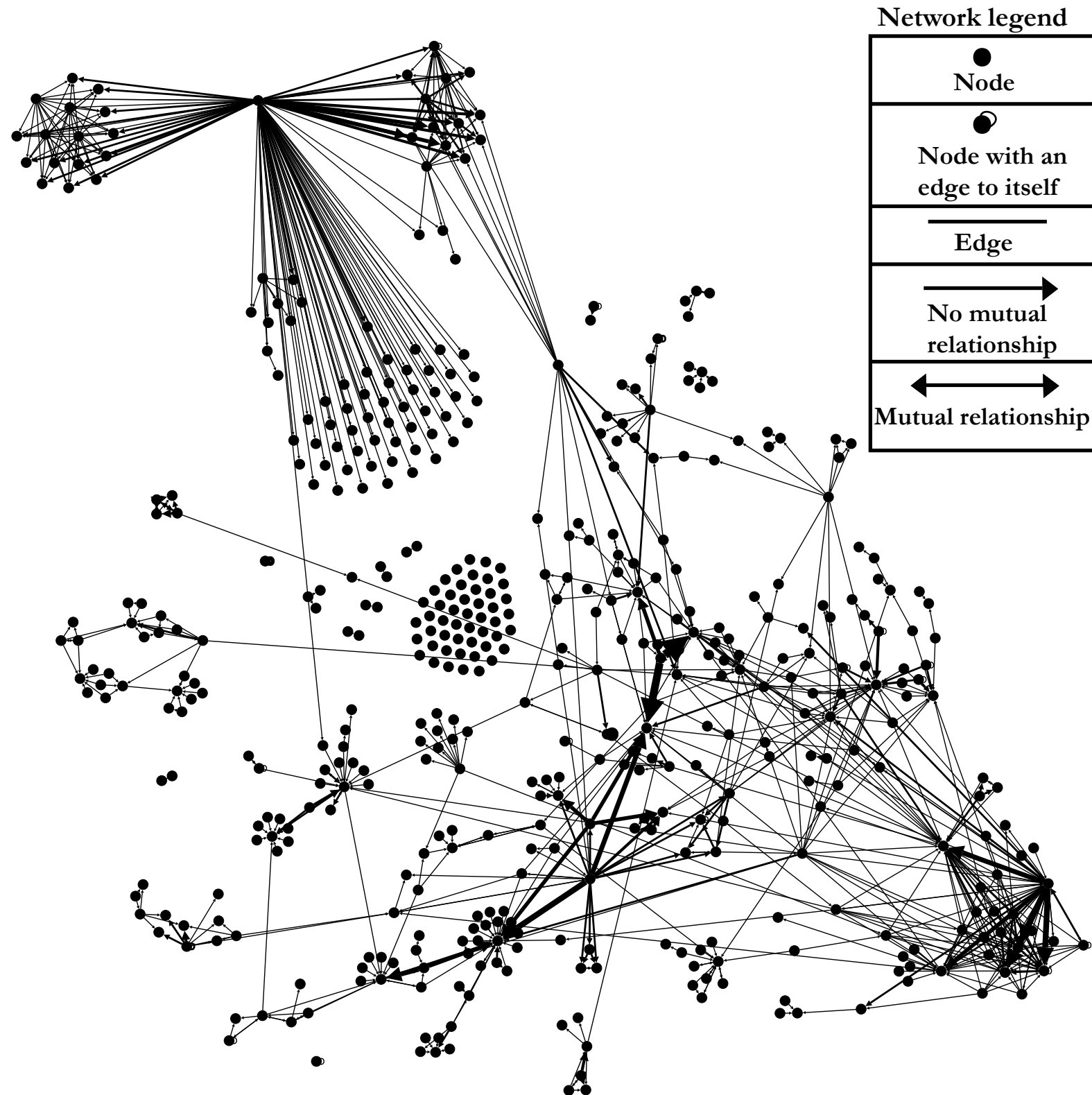
We also decided to filter out those not connected to the larger component. This means that we have filtered out any actors who did not interact or participate in discussions in the greater network, leaving out any singletons, triads or similar. Filtering out these smaller components still left us with the majority intact as we only lost 74 of the nodes (489 to 414) and 20 of the edges (874 to 854). Our decision to remove these nodes was based on an observation that the majority of the network is in some way connected to each other through either @mention or @reply. We would argue that filtering allowed for a better representation of the overall relationships in the network while being easier to analyze.

In this study we also provide two visualizations, the first visualization is a black and white presentation of how the entire network appears in Gephi before we apply a filter. It also contains links back to earlier chapters for a reminder and a network legend that visualizes essential figures present in network analysis.

The second visualization is colorized and is the one this study focused on. It also contains a link to earlier chapters but also a color legend that explains their meaning in this study. This visualization also contains a link in italics on the right-hand side where we provide a link to a Google drive where you are able to view the network with only a color- and network legend for anyone interested in a closer inspection

## 4.2 Network visualization of #Migpol on Twitter, September 8 2018

### Unfiltered and full view of the network



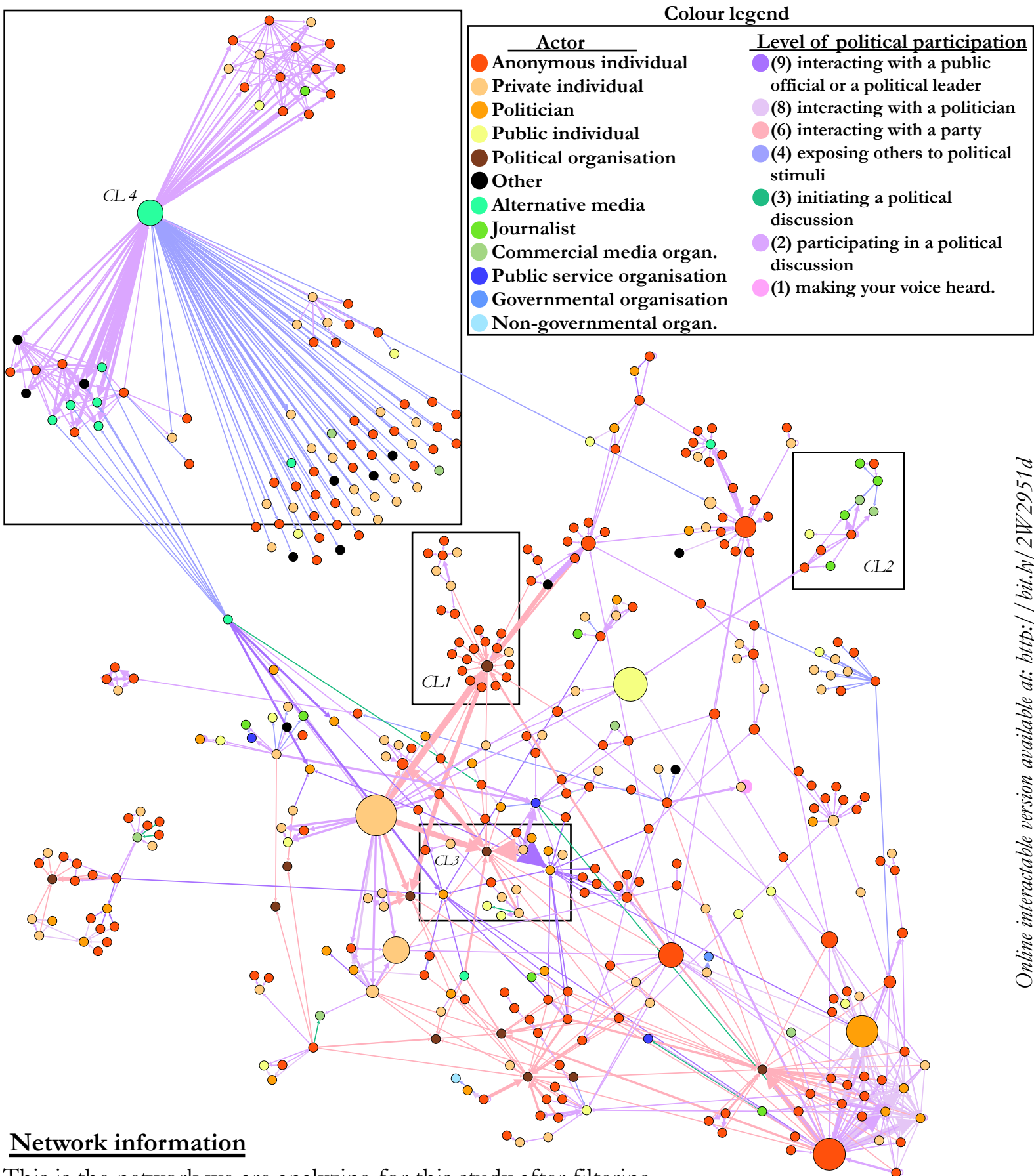
### Network information

This is how the network appears before the application of *roles* (detailed in 3.1.1) or *size variations* (detailed in 3.1.2), it shows a high amount of *interaction* (detailed in 1.5) creating the many *edges* between *nodes* (both detailed in 3.1) and the *arrowheads* on edges reveal the *direction* and *relationships* (detailed in 3.1). It also contains the nodes that act as their own *components* (detailed in 3.1), which leaves in nodes that have no connection to the much larger component and have been filtered out as we believed that those more connected were more important to focus on (discussed in 4.1).

All data have been collected and coded manually by us (detailed in 3.3) and is comprised of 489 total nodes and 874 total edges but is only a small sample of the total population (detailed and discussed in 3.4).

## 4.3 Network visualization of #Migpol on Twitter, September 8 2018

Filtered into a single large component



Online interactive version available at: <http://bit.ly/2W2951d>

### Network information

This is the network we are analyzing for this study after filtering out nodes not connected and applying our theoretical concepts. Size has been adjusted according to *centrality value*. We have ranked their participation using the discourse analysis and according to the modified list by *Pizzorno* (detailed in 2.4). This network has a *density* of 0.004.

We have also identified clusters of actors that were particularly interesting when we reviewed the network based on an actors centrality value. These have been framed and identified by CL and a following number (CL1-CL3) and further discussed in 4.4.2 and 4.4.4.

## 4.4 Network analysis results

This section presents the results from our network method that we found in the pursuit of answers to our research questions (RQ) which asked the following:

RQ 1: In #Migpol on Twitter on the 8th of September 2018, what are the different types of Swedish actors (private individuals, politicians, commercial organizations, etc.) present?

RQ 1a: Which role of these actors is the most dominant in terms of centrality?

RQ 1b: Which roles of these actors are the most dominant in terms of interactions in the hashtag?

### 4.4.1 Roles and nationality

In order to find an answer to RQ1, we needed to establish both the roles that actors inhabit and the nationality that they belong to.

The distribution of roles that we have assigned to the actors in the network can be seen in table 2 while a more in-depth discussion and explanation can be found further below in analysis and discussion.

*Table 1- The distribution of roles for actors present  
in the network*

Anonymous individuals 53%
Private individuals 23 %
Public individual 4%
Political organization 3%
Other 3%
Alternative media 3%
Journalist 2%
Commercial media organization 2%
Public, governmental and non- governmental organization <1%

For nationality, the majority of actors we found in the network could be identified as being Swedish. This was based on the language that they had used in their tweets combined with the language we found them use in their Twitter feed. Inspecting some of the actor's Twitter feed was also necessary to avoid placing the wrong nationality as a few wrote in the English language and had their account information in

English as well, their Twitter feed revealed that the main language for communication was still Swedish. Some Swedish actors also presented a Swedish flag in their account. The distribution of nationalities can be seen in table 3 below.

*Table 2 - Nationality of actors present inside the network,  
determined by their use of language*

Swedish actors 80%
Non-Swedish actors 19%
Dual identity (Swedish plus another) <1%

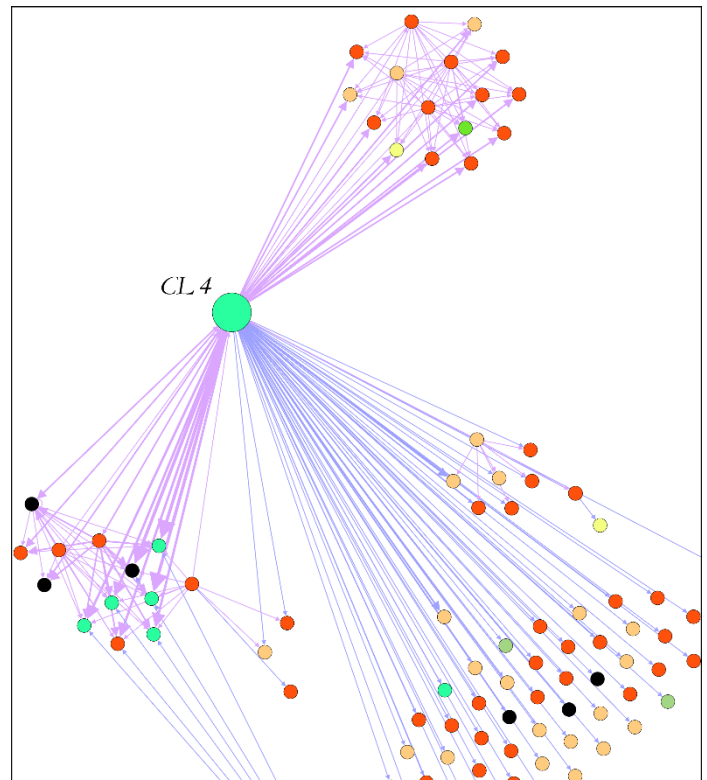
#### **4.4.2 Analysis and discussion**

We tried to establish the roles of the actors following Scott's (2017) explanation of Burt's approach to sampling data. The end result is a relatively large variation in roles we could apply to the actors being present, not only anonymous but roles such as private and public. However, despite the fact that we became well acquainted with the data it was still not easy to find identifiable social characteristics such as work profession or identity, which left us with the majority of actors being put into the anonymous role.

Discerning nationality was, on the other hand, an easier process as we were looking at the language for communication and some actors also provided their nationality in their profile. For example, we found an actor who identified him-/herself as having a dual identity of unspecified middle eastern origin while also being Swedish. What was interesting was that the hashtag, at least during the selected day of data collection was predominantly used by Swedish actors whereas we believed it to have more international actors at the start of the study.

While the use of a Swedish flag may be an indicator for nationality it could also be an indirect indication of political affiliation or sympathy. This is based on the fact that both the Swedish political parties Sverigedemokraterna (SD) and Alternativ för Sverige (AfS) use it prominently as part of their image. We did find that in the case of political affiliation being explicitly visible on the account page, it was in favor of AfS, a relatively new party founded in 2017. AfS is a far-right political party whose political stance on migration politics is to start sending immigrants back to their home countries and they employ a slogan "saving our country" (Alternativ för Sverige, 2019a). The party was formed by SD politicians dissatisfied with how their party changed their stance on migration politics. This would indicate according to Pizzorno (1970) that AfS is political action made manifest and formed as a response to SD becoming more bureaucratized and abandoning their original stance on migration to become more acceptable to the general public.

When analyzing the different actors, we found something that was difficult to understand at first as it was an alternative media actor (visible in figure 2) that had a confusing inclusion of actors in their tweets that they were creating @mentions towards, with incredibly few of these actors being Swedish. Instead, the majority of the actors that the alternative media account reached out to were American actors or other alternative media outlets in different countries such as Finland. When we analyzed the American actors to find a common link, we found that each of the American actors either had outspoken support for Donald Trump, the “Make America Great Again” (MAGA) slogan, or other American traditional conservative values. This also presented some interesting thoughts, as the media identity



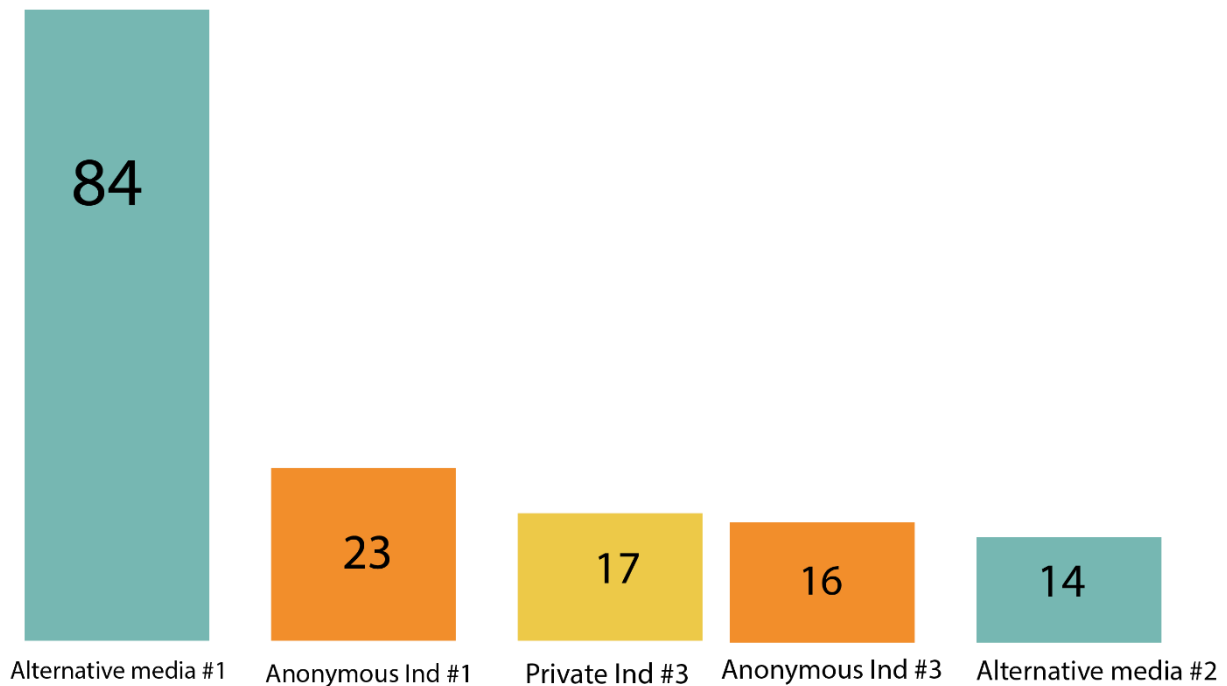
*Figure 1- Swedish alternative media actor reaching out to different actors most of whom are not Swedish*

may explain why it would try and reach out towards other alternative media in order to gain even more reach for the news articles they produce. However, it is the connection to American politics that we found more interesting. We speculate that it might be because of Trump’s own controversial immigration politics on which he has received critique by the mainstream media.

#### **4.4.3 Interactions and centrality values**

Finding answers to RQ1a and RQ1b requires an investigation into the relationships created by interactions found inside the network. Considering that centrality value is intrinsically linked to interactions, we chose to present the results together as well.

When calculating the values for the highest amount of interactions we found that these roles present themselves as the highest with most interactions made during the 24-hour period, visible in figure 3.



*Figure 2 - these were the actors that used @reply and @mentions the most during the day*

Of all the actors in the network, these were simply the ones that had been the most active by interacting with others. Alternative media #1 is the same media actor that is present in figure 2 with the many edges stretching outwards.

Following our theoretical framework, we also ranked their interactions according to the adapted and reworked list by Alessandro Pizzorno, the results of which are shown in table 4 below

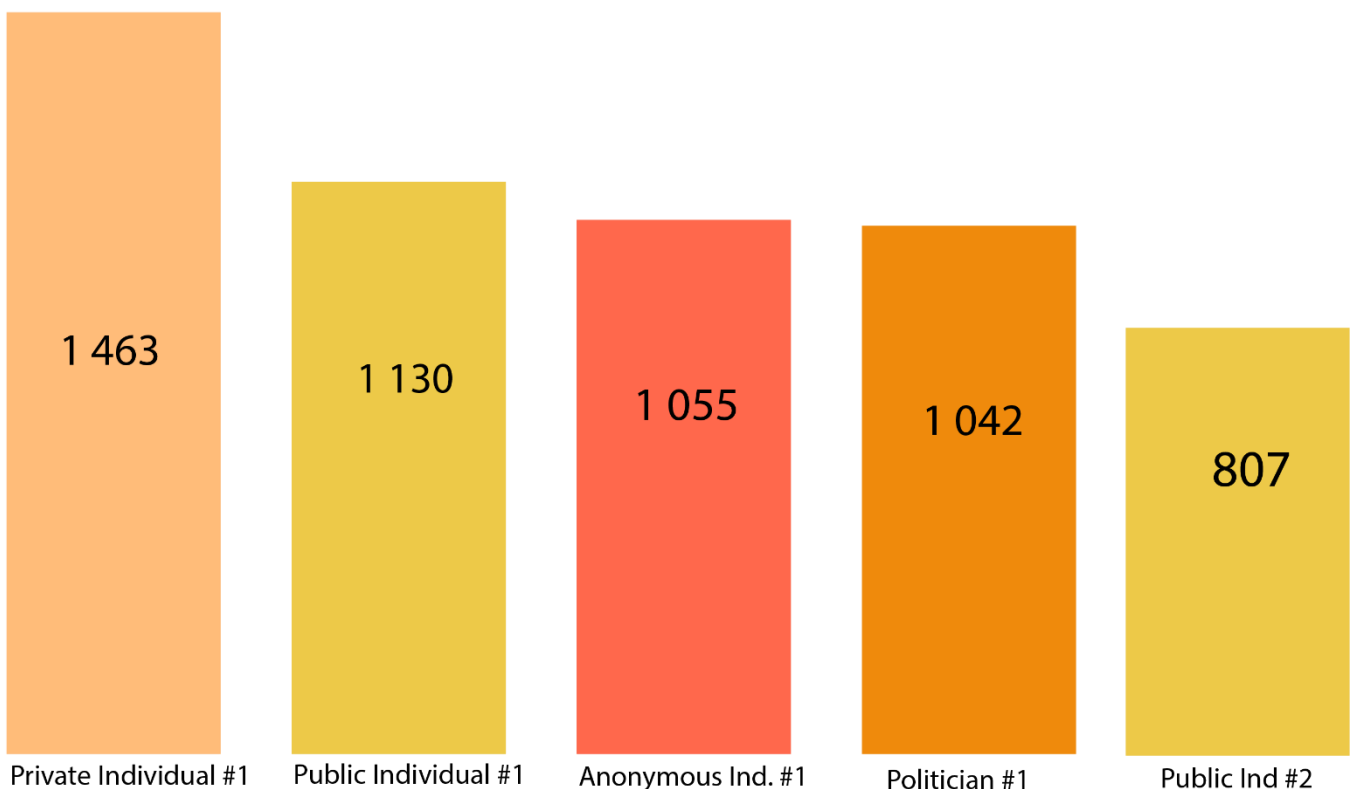
*Table 3 - The level of participation of actors present in the network  
utilizing the reworked list from Pizzorno (1970)*

(4) participating in a political discussion 57%
(6) interacting with a political party 15%
(2) exposing others to political stimuli 11%
(8) interacting with a politician 11%
(9) interacting with a public official or a political leader 5%

(3) initiating a political discussion 1%
(1) making your voice heard a<1%

What this showed was that when discerning which level of political participation level can be attributed interactions made by actors, the majority of replies and original tweets that we read showed that not many chose to initiate in a political discussion in other tweets but rather participate in existing discussions. Similarly, many actors chose to interact with party accounts rather than with politicians or party leaders.

In order to find those who are more central in the network and then analyzing their tweets further with the secondary method to find whether or not there might be a correlation with power, we utilized the betweenness centrality measurement. This was done by following Golbeck (2013) explanation of how betweenness centrality is often used for identifying those important for information transmission. The results of the calculations are shown in figure 3 while the results of the discourse are found in 4.5.3.



*Figure 3 - Actors who had the highest centrality value possible, 1463 was the highest but a majority received a value of 0*

Additionally, to further aid in understanding interactivity and centrality values we have included a density measure for the network in order to determine how well connected the actors are with each other. The measurement results containing “max value”, “estimated value”, and “actual value” can be found in table 5.

*Table 4 - Density measure with max, estimated and actual value  
of mutual relationships within the network*

Max value	Estimated value	Actual value
1	0.1	0.004

While the different measurements we used reveal that not all actors who interacted the most were the most central, it was the density measurement that revealed that the network is incredibly sparse in mutual relationships as it falls well below our own predictions for the density.

#### 4.4.4 Analysis and discussion

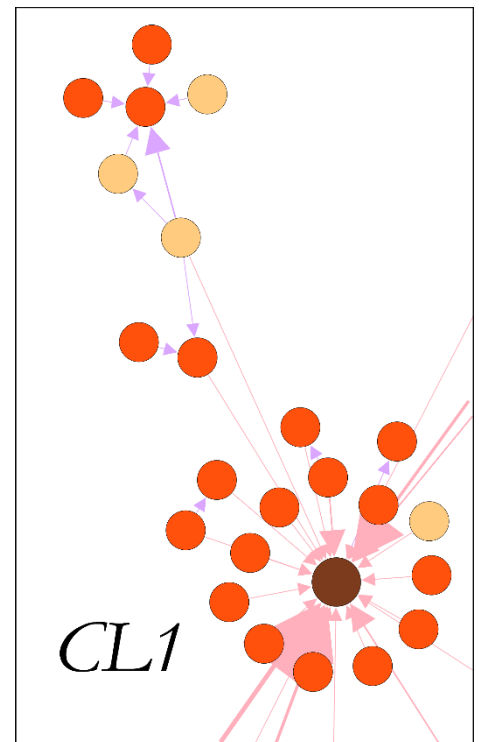
When we saw that the density value was incredibly low when compared to our own estimated value, we became confused and resorted to a closer analysis of the network visualization to find more answers. In our initial viewing of the network before we applied the measurement we believed that there would be more mutual relationships despite having a directed network.

We began by analyzing interactions with political organizations, where we found that there was a distinct difference in interaction rates. Comparing cluster one (figure 4) to cluster three (figure 5) we found there were more anonymous actors who only interacted once with the organization in cluster one than there were in cluster three. Instead, actors who interacted had interacted with the organization in cluster three had done

so with more actors spread out in the

*Figure 4 - Cluster 1, algorithm reveals that this organization attracts more actors who only participated once in the network*

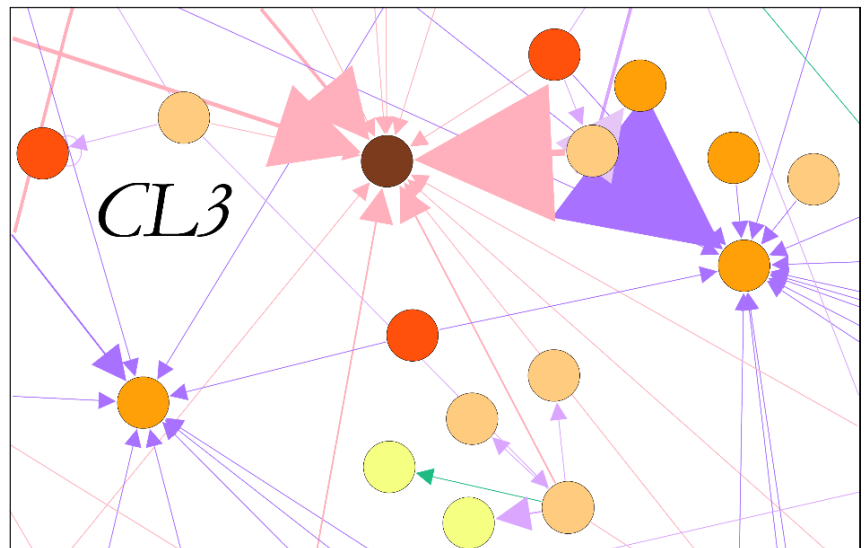
network than only with the organization. It was however in cluster two (figure 6) that we began to figure out why the density had become incredibly sparse, as the interactions in this cluster from journalists were focused towards other journalists while anonymous actors tried to interact with them without much success. We then began reviewing more actors across the network and realized that this was a common occurrence for interactions in the network, many actors who had created a @mention or a @reply to other actors had gained no response in return. This has led to the network consisting of many nodes and edges but very few



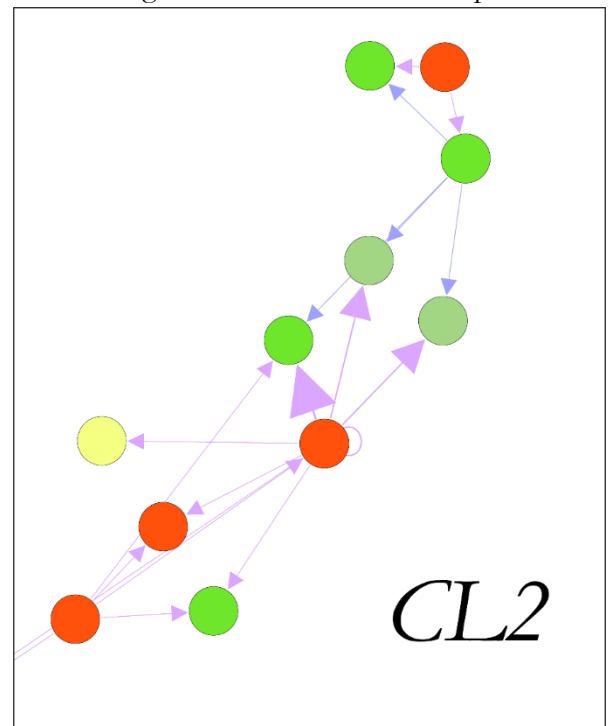
cases of mutual interaction. In addition to their roles, actors now also became one-way “bridges” as they connect smaller networks into a single much larger network (Golbeck, 2013, p. 70).

We also found that in some mutual relationships actors expressed themselves similarly to each other (discussed more in 4.5.2), the most interesting case of was two of the actors with the highest centrality value of which Public Individual #1 had created no original tweet in the hashtag but only replied to Private Individual #1 with the highest value. This could indicate that some actors who had received a high value may not be influential for the entire network, as actors could possibly be more interested in interacting with other actors who expressed similar ideas that they themselves agreed with. While not something this study is designed for, this could possibly be evidence of the existence of a filter bubble or an echo chamber, as a study done by Barberá et al (2015) showed that echo chambers are prevalent in ideological discussions on Twitter. We would also argue that this lack of mutual relationships in our network indicates that the statements made by participants in Kennedy’s (2016) critiquing research using social media data contain some measure of truth as well. Individuals might see something they agree or disagree with, interact and then move on to something else entirely. At the same time, many actors have more than one relationship in the network which indicates that the interest in participating did not disappear entirely as some actors returned to the hashtag and interact with more actors.

When investigating the Twitter feeds of the different actors in the network, we also found that the vast majority of the actors from all roles showed that they used Twitter dominantly for interacting with political content. To us, this is evidence that there needs to be something similar to Pizzorno’s (1970) list of



*Figure 6 - Cluster three, algorithm layout reveals that actors not only participated with this organization but other across the network*



*Figure 5 - Cluster two, the lack of mutual relationships here was indicative of the relationships across the entire network*

political participation where you are able to analyze qualitatively or quantitatively to aid in understanding how actors other than those of the “elite” utilize the service.

## 4.5 Secondary method results

This section presents the results from our secondary method that we found in the pursuit of answers to our research questions (RQ) which asked the following:

RQ 2: How are the actors positioning themselves to indicate personal or collective beliefs when discussing the dominant topics?

RQ 2a: How does the discourse relate to actor centrality in the network?

#### 4.5.1 Dominant topics

Following Jørgensen (2000) suggestion, when we reviewed each tweet containing #Migpol in order to gain an understanding of the most dominant topics, actors mainly discussed two events. The first was a controversy that revolved around Swedish public service denouncing a statement made by the party leader of SD on the 7th of September and the second was AfS who had held a public speech during the 8th of September. We also discovered that actors did not rely solely on #Migpol to discuss these events but instead many actors used other hashtags in combination with Migpol. The word cloud created with NVivo, also revealed that hashtags other than Migpol were the most frequently recurring words.

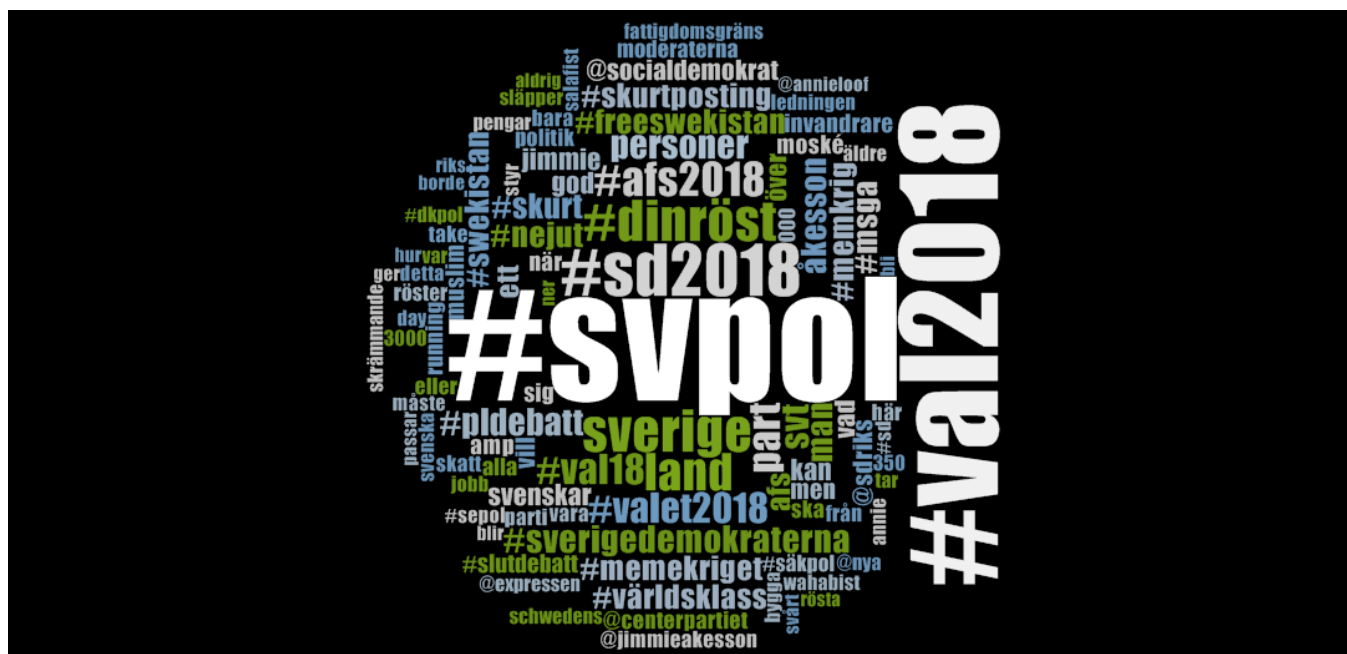


Figure 7 - Word cloud created with words from actors who used #Migpol; the size indicates how frequently they were used. In this case, hashtags were the most dominant.

In the top five most frequent hashtags used by actors, we found that #svpol was used 267 times, #val2018 was used 208 times, #sd2018 was used 98 times, #dinröst was used 73 times, and #afs2018 was used 56 times.

The first hashtag was indicative of the relationship between migration- and Swedish politics which could explain why there were a majority of Swedish actors during this day, the second hashtag indicated that the tweets were connected to the Swedish Riksdagsval of 2018 as it is a variation of previous hashtags in earlier elections. The last three of these hashtags were indicative of our own understanding of the most dominant topics as they had a relation to the organizations that were part of the controversy on the 7th and the public speech on the 8th. #dinröst was associated directly to the Swedish public service organization, which they promoted and used during the 2018 election to gather public opinion (SVT, 2018). #SD2018 and #AfS2018 are variations on existing hashtags in which a political party is promoted in the context of a certain year. More importantly, SD's party leader was part of the controversy on the 7th and AfS had held a public speech on the 8th.

When looking deeper into these hashtags, we tried to find how the actors position themselves in their message by examining their use of the Swedish subject pronouns “jag”, “vi”, “dom”, and “du” (I, us, they and you in singular form). However, as the majority of users did not use these specific pronouns that we searched for, we chose to include messages that did not, but were still representative of what we found in the topics and then compared their expression to actors who had used these pronouns.

Out of the 98 times, #SD2018 was included in a message and discussing the dominant topics, we found that only 34 of these included a pronoun in their message, with “**You**” being the most used.

Example of a message using a pronoun in #SD2018:

(1) *“Do **you** agree with the discussion about the failure of integration that happened last night that the other major parties have conducted in the last three centuries?*

*#dinröst #val2018 #valet2018 #SD2018 #migpol #pldebatten #pldebatt”*

Example of a message without a pronoun in #SD2018:

(2) *“Public service denouncing an opinion really shows that it's not independent or neutral. Close it all down! #svpol #Migpol #val2018 #pldebatt #afs2018 #sd2018”*

Out of the 76 times, #dinröst was used, we found that 9 included a pronoun in their message, with “you” being the most used.

Examples of messages using a pronoun in #dinröst:

(3): ***Your** forefathers tore themselves up for **you**. **You** are only borrowing this legacy from the next generation. This is not **yours** to do whatever with. Do **your** duty for Sweden tomorrow.*

*#AfS2018 #Exaaakt #migpol #svpol #SD2018 #val2018 #valet2018 #dinröst*

Example of a message not using a pronoun in #dinröst:

(4) *“Terrifying that mosque management can control thousands of votes. While getting income from Wahabis and letting in*

*Salafists, providing free support. A quarter million old taxpayers receive beneath standard EU poverty income.*

#svpol #dinröst #slutdebatt #pldebatt #socialdemokrat #svtnyheter #hannastjarne”

Out of the 56 times, #afs2018 was used, we found that 13 used pronouns of which “**we**” were the most used.

Example of a message not using a pronoun in #afs2018:

(5) *Just shut the border and no more asylum. Stop playing with these criminals!*

#AfS2018 #migpol #säkpol #svpol”

Example of a message using a pronoun in #afs2018:

(6) *Look what happens when reds try to disturb strong-AFS! The Swede has risen, and **we** will not be pushed around any longer. **We** are taking our country back.*

#svpol #Migpol #afs2018 #sd2018 #nejut #högenergi

#### 4.5.2 Analysis and discussion

When analyzing the examples, we discovered something interesting. In our initial view of the topics, we realized that using Goffman’s (2014) theory of a setting as dictating what the message would contain was only partially true. While each of the tweets is political, they are not necessarily only directed towards migration politics, as seen in example 2. We would argue that this indicates in favor of Bruns and Burgess (2011) argument, that actors do not tailor their messages to the hashtag but rather includes hashtags to spread messages to the largest possible audience. This is also visible by the many hashtags that the tweets contained in all of the examples, with some such as #socialdemokrat in example 4 having no correlation to the content included in the message.

When considering that the controversy was on the 7th and AfS held a public speech on the 8th, the interest in these additional hashtags may also be artificially increased as the events are incredibly close together. This is also in relation to AfS’s political promises to shut down the current public service in order to create new public service organizations (Alternativ för Sverige, 2019b) as a possible reason to why we could see many negative reactions towards the controversy on the 7th of September such as in example 2 where there is an inclusion of #SD2018 and #AFS2018 compared to example 1 where there is only #SD2018.

When viewing the transmitted expression as argued by Goffman (2014) and analyzing the actor’s position in their message reveals that the actors who used a pronoun did so not from a visible personal belief, as we could not find topics where a majority of users used “I”. Instead, they distance themselves from their message and direct it by using “you” (singular form) towards the reader, such as in example 1 or try to convince that it is the readers who must take action as in example 3 where they also included “your”. The only place where there was an indication of a collective belief was in example 6 where they used “we” in combination with “The Swede”. In cases such as this, the actor positioned themselves alongside the belief

that there has been a change in some sort of dichotomy by stating that “we will not be pushed around anymore”. In comparison, when actors did not use these specific pronouns they still expressed similar opinions but in a different manner. Example 2 and 5 are more direct in what their opinions are in matters related to migration politics and political party agenda as they demand action to be taken, stating “just shut the border down” and “close it all down” when compared to example 1 who directs his message towards the reader and asks their opinion asking “do you believe [...]”.

We also found that there was a third topic aside from the controversy and the public speech visible in how the actors expressed their opinion on migration, which was in majority focused on Muslims as seen in example 4 who has a focus on specific variations of the Islamic belief such as Salafism and Wahhabism. The former of which has had a presence in Sweden, advocating to live by rules of Islam (Olsson, 2012). This was interesting as we simultaneously could find other cultural elements present in other messages as seen in example 6 on the Swede fighting back. The focus on the change in dichotomy and the Swedish culture could indicate that similar to Kreis (2017) who discovered in his research in a different hashtag, a growing sense of nationalism (p.511). We could not find expressions from users that fit Pizzorno’s (1970) idea of political subculture, users were expressing commitment rather than hesitation similar to example 6.

#### 4.5.3 Centrality value and discourse

After the software for the network analysis had completed the calculations for centrality values, we analyzed the tweets where actors had used the original hashtag migpol and gained the highest value and compared them to actors with the lowest values. However, as a result of the lack of mutual relationships in our network (discussed in 4.4.4), many actors received a centrality value of 0 which left us unable to reflect fully how centrality value affects the discourse due to the word limit in this study. Instead, we have decided to present three actors with the highest centrality and three of those with the lowest possible close to 0 in order to present the differences we found when comparing them.

When reviewing the actors with the highest centrality values, we found that the actors had two things in common when compared to the lower centrality values. The first being that these actors were engaging in multiple different conversations which had the effect of increasing their centrality value with the measurement we used as they were simply more active along with other users. The second thing that they shared was that they at one point during the day engaged in a similar discussion to the dominant topics. In order to visualize the differences, we chose one example from each actor and present a table beneath each of the examples showing their total active while using #Migpol in their tweets.

Example (7); *“Everything is within SD’s calculation. They love playing the victim. At the same time, they managed to get their message across that immigrants are the greatest problem in Sweden. #Migpol #pldebatt #val2018 #valet2018”*

*Table 5 - Total activity in the hashtag made by Private individual #1*

Total number of tweets made by the actor	Total number of interactions received from other actors	Total number of interactions given to other actors	Centrality value
8	8	17	1463

Example 8: *“I concur with @public individual - SVT has given the party that opportunity and it removes focus from other topics that should be debated instead. #svpol #Migpol”*

*Table 6 - Total activity in the hashtag made by Politician #1*

Total number of tweets made by the actor	Total number of interactions received from other actors	Total number of interactions given to other actors	Centrality value
4	24	3	1041

Example 9: *“Minions hit the bullseye on Swedish elections! Sweden would be better off if the minions had formed a government and their leader controlled @public service (@political party) (@political party) (@political party) (@political party) (@political party) (@political party) #Migpol #svpol #valet2018”*

*Table 7 - Total activity in the hashtag made by Anonymous Individual #1*

Total number of tweets made by the actor	Total number of interactions received from other actors	Total number of interactions given to other actors	Centrality value
3	21	23	1054

In comparison, the actors who had among the lowest value possible did not engage in multiple conversations but appeared only once and did not partake in the dominant topics but instead shared their own opinion about the then political parties who had the power as seen in example 10, 11, and 12.

Example 10: *“@political party What injustice? Women, kids, diseased and crippled poor, etc. remains over there while Sweden cares for the ablest for billions of crowns? This is equal to two of (NGO) who aids millions of migrants? #hyckleri #svpol #Migpol”*

*Table 8 - Total activity in the hashtag made by Anonymous individual #2*

Total number of tweets made by the actor	Total number of interactions received from other actors	Total number of interactions given to other actors	Centrality value
2	3	2	1

Example 11; “Red and greens hated first. Exclusionary acts against those who don’t believe in the unlimited multicultural from those with a hard time to integrate is an amazing idea. Killings and the feeling of being unsafe has stretched across entire Sweden #VAL2018 #svpol #migpol”

*Table 9 - Total activity in the hashtag made by Anonymous individual #3*

Total number of tweets made by the actor	Total number of interactions received from other actors	Total number of interactions given to other actors	Centrality value
2	2	4	2

Example 12; “Propaganda in different languages from @ political party seems to have worked wonders, this is what some immigrants are indoctrinated with and now believe and spread. #svpol #valet2018 #Migpol”

*Table 10 - Total activity in the hashtag made by public individual #2*

Total number of tweets made by the actor	Total number of interactions received from other actors	Total number of interactions given to other actors	Centrality value
1	12	1	3

#### 4.5.4 Analysis and discussion

While there was a slight deviation in the discourse depending on centrality value, what was more interesting was the fact that the actors who discussed the events of the 7th did so outside of the hashtags. This would be in contrast to how Zappavigna (2012) argue that actors utilize hashtags to create “searchable talk” (p. 1) as the actors have still discussed the topic outside of them. It could also indicate that the hashtags were simply utilized for a related but temporary purpose similar to how Bruns and Hallvard (2014) argued that hashtags are used as a way to signal the actor's desire to participate in those particular conversations (p. 18).

However, when viewing the activity of each actor we also found something else of interest. When considering that centrality value is dependent on actor interactions, we saw that the right-wing politician in

example 8 who received a high centrality value was comparably less active to the actor in example 9 when reaching out to others. Similarly, the public individual actor in example 12 was less active when compared to the other two actors with a low value. Surprisingly, we could not find any left-wing politicians present in #Migpol using our collected data.

In the case of the right-wing politician, it might be a symptom of the overall interest of the day as visible in table 4 in 4.4.3 which showed that 11% of actors in the network interacted with a politician. However, considering that the word cloud also showed that there was a high interest in right-wing ideology as both #SD2018 and #AFS2018 was among the top five hashtags used during this day it could also explain the interest in interacting with a politician who shares ideology rooted in the same side of the political spectrum.

Example 12 also shows that there might be something else behind this, considering that among the lowest values they have the highest interaction rate despite only creating one tweet with one interaction. This could indicate that there are actors who are more well-known present in the hashtag as well which would affect the interest in interactions as they have a rumor similar to how Goffman (2014) argues that reputation affects how others view the actor's performance in a social encounter.

Additionally, example 7 was especially interesting as it was the only conversation in which we could find the resemblance of a team according to Goffman's (2014) explanation as they expressed themselves in a similar manner. It was in a conversation by two of the actors who received among the highest centrality, shown in examples 13, and 14 below.

Example (13): *"What SVT did was a complete disaster. The national television has not only transgressed themselves towards SD but the whole election. Now everyone is talking about the political farce made by SVT, instead of anything else that was said during the debate."*

**Table 11 - - Total activity in the hashtag made by Public individual #1**

Total number of tweets containing #Migpol made by the actor	Total number of interactions received from other actors	Total number of interactions given to other actors	Centrality value
0	5	2	1129

Example (14) *“Exactly. The most probable guess is that it was all carefully considered by SD, and it would seem that they all fell for it”*

*Table 12 - Total activity in the hashtag made by private individual #3*

Total number of tweets containing #Migpol made by the actor	Total number of interactions received from other actors	Total number of interactions given to other actors	Centrality value
0	1	4	0

This showed more evidence that the dominant topics were focused on more during the 8<sup>th</sup> of September, as they all discussed similar to those that did so with another hashtag present.

## 5 Conclusions

*In this chapter we present our answers to our initial research questions found in 1.2, we discuss any limitations we might have encountered during this study and how we tried to solve them, if there is anything of relevance to society and how future research should be done.*

### 5.1 The answers for research questions

These are the answers that we have found for each of the research questions we asked in 1.2. We have sorted them into two subparagraphs depending on the method for easier reading.

#### 5.1.1 Network analysis questions

These are the answers we found utilizing the network analysis method

**Research Question 1:** In #Migpol on Twitter on the 8th of September 2018, what are the different types of Swedish actors (private individuals, politicians, commercial organizations, etc.) present?

**Answer:** There were Swedish actors present in the roles of private individual, public individual, anonymous individual, politician, alternative media, journalist, commercial media organization, political organization, public service organizations, non-governmental organizations and other. We could determine their nationality by investigating the feed of their profile which showed that Swedish was the main language for communication.

**Research Question 1a:** Which role of these actors is the most dominant in terms of centrality?

**Answer:** Utilizing the betweenness-centrality calculation made available by Gephi, we identified that the public role had the most representation in the top five actors out of 58. However, we would argue that the measurement that we chose is not accurate as we discovered that the network structure consists mainly of

one-way interactions and not mutual relationships. This has led to only 58 out of 414 actors receiving a centrality value.

**Research Question 1b:** Which roles of these actors are the most dominant in terms of interactions in the hashtag?

**Answer:** We found that political organizations were dominant for receiving interactions from other Swedish actors while one alternative media actor was dominantly interacting with non-Swedish actors.

### 5.1.2 Secondary method questions

These are the answers we found utilizing the secondary method:

**Research Question 2:** How are the actors positioning themselves to indicate personal or collective belief when discussing the dominant topics?

**Answer:** We identified the following two topics as dominant by investigating into each tweet containing #Migpol and by employing a word cloud which showed similar results; the first dominant topic was the controversy on a Swedish public service channel on the 7th of September that involved SVT and Sverigedemokraterna and a public speech held by Alternativ för Sverige on the 8th of September. There was also an element of a third emerging topic visible in how actors expressed opinions on Muslim migration which we found as a potential indication of an emerging sense of nationalism similar to research done by Kreis (2017). Actors did not in majority position themselves using the Swedish pronouns of I, we, they or you in singular form when discussing the dominant topics, those who did were in minority and utilized “we” to indicate a collective belief and you as a way to ask for opinions or as a call to action.

**Research Question 2a:** How does the discourse relate to actor centrality in the network?

**Answer:** We could not find any discernible differences based around the actor’s individual centrality value except in the tweets for the actors with a lower value, where they were more personal in their transmitted message. However, the topics were pervasive throughout the discourse and choice of including additional hashtags regardless of having a high or low centrality.

Also, when reviewing the actor's activities in the hashtag, we found a possible indication that some of the actors might be more well-known inside #Migpol as they were not as active as others but still received a higher value from actors interacting with them.

## 5.2 How we solved our limitations

During the course of this study, we were faced with two things that adversely affected how we performed this study.

The first was the failure of Mecodify, the automated software we chose to collect our data. In our initial attempts with the software, it failed to produce reliable data entirely as it could not accurately retrieve data from the 8th of September 2018. We reached out to Theo Röhle who assisted us in obtaining the data and the software successfully retrieved data relating to users who had created tweets during this day however it failed to retrieve reliable data regarding @mentions and @replies that were crucial for us to construct our network. To solve this, we collected the data manually using the list provided by Mecodify and coded the network manually which was an arduous process that took much longer than an automated process would have and forced us to limit our study to a single day rather than our intended month.

The second problem we faced is the newly adopted European law GDPR which proved to be a much greater challenge than we first believed. The law is written in such a way that we found it incredibly hard to justify both ethically and morally to conduct this study with details about users and at the same time balancing it with the requirement of us as researchers. Furthermore, we also had to navigate Swedish law at the same time which limited our options even more in how we could present the results, as the material we study is considered as sensitive. This is all in combination with the fact that the GDPR law was adopted in 2018 and we were unable to find any examples that we could follow. We were however committed to this research as we saw that there were gaps in the knowledge that required more research and could potentially yield results that society can benefit from and therefore have done our absolute best to ensure that the study can be used as an example to others who face these issues in the future.

## 5.3 Future research and implications for society

At the start of the study, our purpose was to try and provide new ideas for existing theories and more research on Swedish Twitter user's participation in political content. While we are unable to say that we have provided new and original ideas, we would argue that we have stayed true to this study's original purpose but that there are aspects which could be improved upon in future research.

Alessandro Pizzorno's ideas on political participation provided us with a new way to investigate the relationships that occur on social media as we were able to find discernable patterns in user behavior. However, there are still qualitative elements to this study that should be expanded upon to provide further validity in future research. This is not limited to having a different method instead of discourse, but to also include the human element of the actual users combined with Pizzorno's ideas which could provide with deeper insight.

Erving Goffman's theory of self-representation proved to be valuable when combined with the network analysis and despite its age showed interesting results when researching social media. It was,

however, not as applicable to the secondary method as we would have hoped. This could have been an error on our part, but it could still be used more thoroughly should future research focus on specific actors discussion rather than actors as a whole.

This is an area that we see is in dire need of similar research, either with our theoretical framework or a different setup and would implore others to continue within this area. There are gaps in the knowledge based on what we have read from Strömbäck (2014), Svensson and Larsson (2016), and Larsson and Moe (2013) where the focus has been on political strategy and not the public reaction. Unlike the previous research, for example, we found that a majority of Swedish users both private and anonymous are active in political matters on Twitter which could yield even more results if the time-frame is lengthened.

Future research should also include other sources for data in order to provide a comparative aspect which could be used to research how Swedish users are drawn to controversial subjects or if there are more tangible signs of a growing nationalism existing on other platforms which we could have seen in our study due to the overly dominating presence of AfS support.

As for implications for society, we would argue that the lack of mutual participation from right-wing and left-wing politicians during a crucial time such as the election adversely affects the democratic process. Any user who would stumble upon this content could be influenced from almost entirely right-wing politics and as this is a controversial subject, there needs to be a balance where discussions can be held. This could, of course, be different with another time-frame where there are left-wing politicians participating but in the closing weeks of the election, many are still undecided, and this could be what changes their mind.

Other issues are the emerging negative views on Muslims, and indications of nationalism that we found, which we would argue shows that it requires more open and transparent politics from those in power. This could be used to face these issues with facts and hopefully, would allow for more open discussions on migration and remove the current stigma.

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## Appendix 1 – Swedish paraphrases for example 1–14

Example 1: Det är ett ytterst uppenbart bevis när man ser att public service väljer att ta avstånd från någons åsikt att dom inte är oberoende eller åsikts neutrala. Det måste läggas ner!

Example 2: @partiledare sa i partiledardebatten att integrationen som drivits av @politiskt parti i 30 år varit en katastrof. Håller du med?

Example 3: Du och nästa generation lånar endast ett arv som dina förfäder har slitit jättehårt för. Detta är inte tillåtet för er att förstöra eller ge bort till någon annan. Kom ihåg att göra din plikt för Sverige imorgon.

Example 4: Hemskt hur moské ledningen kan kontrollera tusentals röster, medan dom får inkomst från Wahabister, och samtidigt låter Salafister komma in och få gratis försörjning. En kvarts miljon gamla skattebetalare får under den vanliga standarden av vad EU bedömer som en fattigdomsgräns.

Example 5: Stoppa asylerna och bara stäng ner gränserna helt och håller.  
Inget mer lek med kriminella!

Example 6: Titta vad som händer när rödingarna stör sig på starka AfS! Inte längre kommer vi bli mobbade då svensken äntligen rest sig upp. Attackera med full kraft, så tar vi tillbaka vårt land!  
#svpol #migpol #afs2018 #sd2018 #nejut #högenergi

Example 7: SD älskar att leka offret, vilket uppenbarligen är inom deras kalkyleringar.  
Under debatten så visade även SD exakt vad dom står för - att icke-svenskar är det riktiga felet på Sverige enligt dom.  
#migpol #pldebatt #val2018 #valet2018”

Example 8: Håller helt med @offentlig person här, public service har gett partiet möjligheten, och detta tar fokus från de andra sakerna som egentligen borde tas upp från debatten.  
#svpol #migpol”

Example 9: Minionerna är fullt kapabla att sätta bullseye på svenska valet!  
Det är uppenbart att dom kan styra landet bättre ifall dom bildat en expeditonsregering och deras ledare höll ratten för @public service.  
(@politiskt parti) (@politiskt parti) (@political party) (@politiskt parti) (@politiskt parti)  
#migpol #svpol #valet2018

Example 10: Vilka orättvisor? Kvinnor, barn, och handikappade etc förblir i Syrien samtidigt som de mest kapabla “vårdas” med miljontals pengar i Sverige? - som sker på DUBBLA den kostnaden av TVÅ organisationer vars hjälpmedel förser till miljoner migranter?  
#hyckleri #svpol #migpol

Example 11: Röda och gröna var de första som hatade, tystade ned, och hängde ut alla som inte tyckte om deras underbara idé till obegränsad mångkultur av sådana som är svårt integrerade. Så spännande att otryggheten, rån och dödande verkligen har spridit sig genom Sverige.  
#VAL2018 #svpol #migpol

Example 12: Bra gjort, @politiskt parti, nu finns eran propaganda på flera olika språk. Det här är vad invandrare går runt och sprider/tror på från eran indoktrinering, jättebra!  
#svpol #valet2018 #Migpol

Example 13: Håller helt med. Dom har inte fått lika uppmärksamhet som dom trodde dom skulle få, men nu lyckades public service fixa det för dom ändå.

Example 14: Håller med. Jag tror allting var noga planerat av SD, och det verkar som att dom gick på allting.