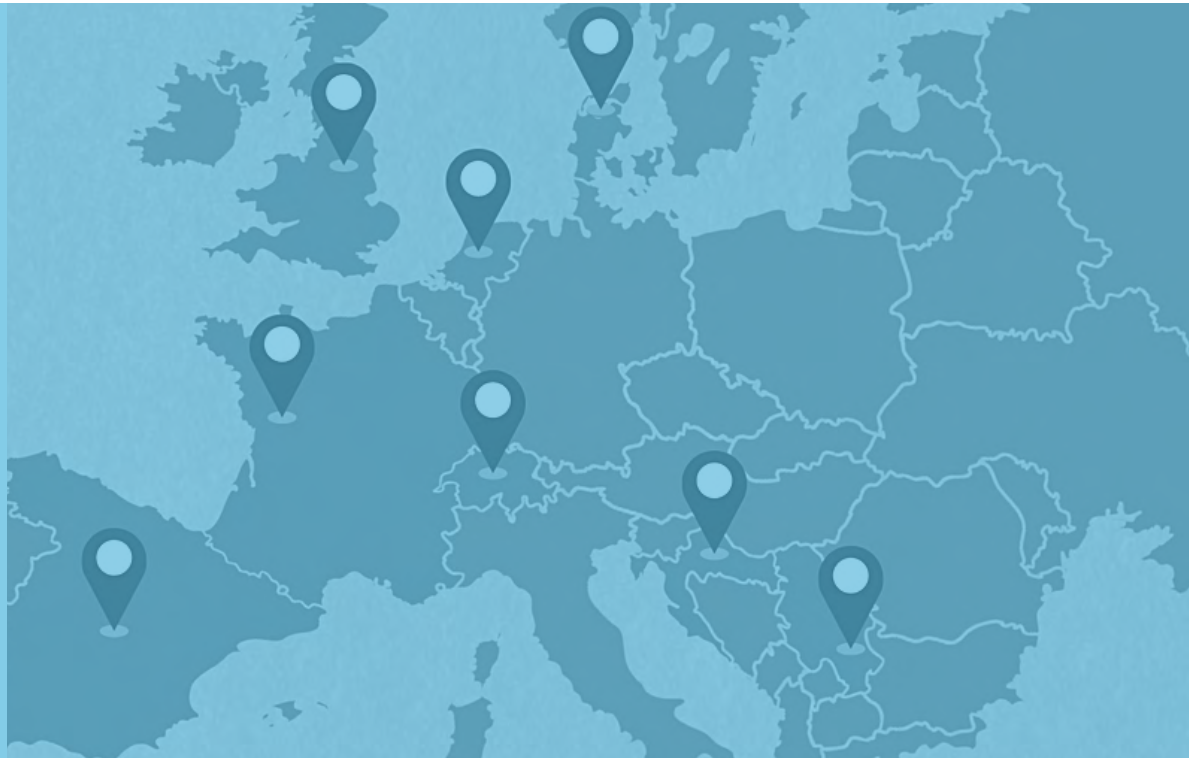


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EUROPEAN INVENTORY
OF CULTURAL VALUES



Advocating for culture in turbulent times

INVENT REPORT D5.2

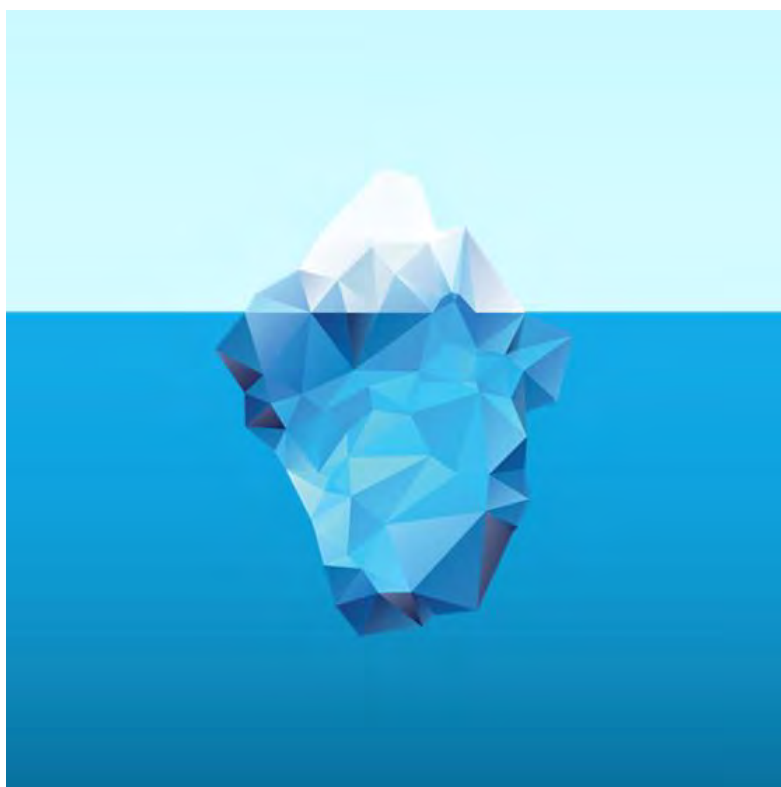
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EUROPEAN INVENTORY OF SOCIETAL VALUES OF CULTURE AS A BASIS FOR INCLUSIVE CULTURAL POLICIES



Deliverable 5.2

Data scraping of online content - Report 2

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Advocating for culture in turbulent times.

Online petitions on Facebook before and during Covid-19.

INVENT Report D5.2

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Executive Summary

This report describes the findings from the second phase (of three) of web data scraping exploring the multifaceted ways in which culture is discussed bottom-up online. While phase I laid out the most prominent topics and discussions in relation to culture on twitter, this phase explores a more specific phenomenon. The focus of this data scraping phase II is on e-petitions, more specifically those related to culture. We are now taking a closer look at the question “What do people talk about when they talk about culture *with the intention of making a difference or achieving a defined cultural goal?*”. As part of INVENT’s ethos of bottom-up approach, we chose to focus on petitions, as they hold potential for studying digital cultural participation from such approach. The research design addressed both the discussions on the online platform Facebook, as well as the petitions mentioned in those posts. To what extent are cultural issues addressed through petitions *online*? To approach this question, all INVENT partner countries first collected data from public Facebook posts mentioning “petition”, then filtered those results with keywords directly relating to the concept of culture. These keywords were derived from previous data collection efforts, mainly using results from a previous INVENT survey. These cultural petition posts were then analysed with a script in the programming language R, defining dominant topics through topic modelling, as well as the most trending posts and petitions. These trending posts were further divided into two analytical time frames: before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (January 2018 - March 2020) and during the first two years of the pandemic (March 2020 – December 2021).

The data scraping shows that e-petitioning is a form of civil involvement that is prevalent in all investigated countries, albeit to different extents. While in many countries, governmental bodies are addressed on general e-petition platforms, where all sorts of topics, petitioners, and addressees can be found, other countries’ governments maintain their own e-petitioning platform. E-petitioning lowers the threshold of political participation and societal engagement for many people, especially compared to the traditional form of paper petitioning. We observed several affordances of e-petitions. Besides influencing policy and decision-making and changing a government’s course, e-petitions fulfil, amongst others, functions like the expression of dissatisfaction and frustration; forming or finding like-minded communities; or alerting others.

The analysis portrays a general overview of cultural issues being discussed through petitions in the INVENT partner countries. We identified seven themes pertaining to the most trending cultural issues discussed on Facebook through online petitions, both on supranational and national levels. (1) children and education, (2) social equality and human rights, (3) social inequality and rifts, (4) national/international rifts, (5) climate change/sustainability, (6) COVID-19 pandemic, and (7) popular culture. The differences between the countries are mainly embodied in the particular focus each country places within each theme. All countries are concerned with similar causes, but the ways citizens suggest tackling specific issues differ.

This report demonstrates a wide variety of themes that are linked to culture that people across nine European countries deem worth advocating for via online petitioning. The diversity of cultural themes that we found stems from an open and broad conceptualization of culture that we employ in this research. The diversity of cultural petitions that resulted from this data collection and analysis also confirms that such a broad conceptualization of culture is required to bring all cultural interests and forms of expression into view. These findings and observations give occasion for recommendations for the development of inclusive and contemporary cultural policies. On the overall level, employing an open and broad view on culture is necessary to achieve the imperative of inclusiveness, and thus making culture accessible to all European citizens.

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1. Introduction

1.1. The INVENT Project & Web Scraping

In the INVENT Project, we aim at developing new perspectives and methodologies for capturing the wider societal value of culture. In acknowledgment of the importance of culture in our changing modern world, we investigate the impact of ongoing processes such as migration, globalization, and digitalization on citizens' perceptions of and participation in culture across Europe. We pay special attention to the use of digital technologies and the ability of the Internet to provide a broader, more democratic access to and participation in culture and heritage. In order to create inclusive and participatory cultural policies suited to the age of globalization, we require scientific insights into how European citizens use online and digital media as a) forms of cultural consumption and b) forms of digital infrastructure that enable access to cultural content and deliberation (see Mihelj, Leguina, & Downey, 2019; Weingartner, 2020).

For this reason, we use web scraping as one of the methodologies through which the INVENT project intends to gain a better understanding of digital engagement with culture and cultural issues. Web scraping entails the extraction of large amounts of data from the internet using a code written in common programming languages (e.g., C/C++, R, Python). By programming a code to retrieve data along clear directives of interest or relevance, web scraping or data scraping presents itself as an unobtrusive and especially useful method for studying various forms of cultural expression, participation, and discourse occurring in its natural and authentic state online, that is, without any interference from a researcher.

Utilizing the merit of this method, we were able to extend investigations into digital cultural expression and participation during our first phase of data scraping (Highfield, Harrington, & Bruns, 2013; Agostino, 2018; but see, e.g., MacDowall & de Souza, 2018). In this first phase, conducted in Spring 2021, we assessed what people talk about when they talk about culture online. Scraping thousands of tweets that included an iteration of the term 'culture' across 9 different countries and languages, allowed us to sketch a landscape outlining the diversity of cultural discourses taking place on the social media platform Twitter (Ben David et al., 2021). Commencing our study of digital participation with scraping online conversations that explicitly mentioned the term 'culture', proved an excellent starting point for discovering and understanding just how diverse and expansive European citizens understand this term to be. It gave us insight into precisely which areas of culture are deemed meaningful from the bottom-up by virtue of being discussed online by citizens. For a detailed overview of the trending topics of conversation we found in the first phase of data scraping see Ben David et al. (2021).

1.2. The Focus of Phase II

For the second phase of data scraping, we built on several key findings that emerged during the first phase. When speaking about culture online, people not only refer to culture as arts or entertainment, i.e., as leisure, popular culture, or creativity, but also to culture as a 'way of life', i.e., as identity, customs, politics, and values at play in their country or community. Secondly, we noticed that people took to Twitter not just to speak of culture in a casual manner, but often appear to have serious and clear intentions. This insight shaped our focus for the second phase of data scraping, throughout which we became increasingly curious about the avenues that European citizens take to raise their voices and concerns for matters pertaining to culture. We wanted to know what cultural issues Europeans deem worthwhile to stand up for and in which manner they employ online channel(s) to actualize their intentions.

So, having explored what people talk about when they talk about culture online, we are now taking a closer look and examine the question "What do people talk about when they talk about culture with the intention of making a difference or achieving a defined cultural goal?" When it comes to cultural issues that people

care for to the extent that they take deliberate action in order to influence decision-making by policy makers or other relevant agents, public petitions have traditionally been a helpful mobilizing tool. In the online era, initiating and participating in online petitions appear to have become increasingly popular in Europe and elsewhere. This wide-spread use and participatory potential of online petitions accord very well with the bottom-up approach of the INVENT project. Hence, we chose to focus on the potential that online petitions hold for (digital) cultural engagement and the study thereof.

1.3. Online Petitions

While there are many avenues to activism, actualizing a goal, and driving change, one of the oldest formats is the petition, understood as a formal request to an authority, usually signed by a group of supporters (Ergazakis, Askounis, Kokkinakos & Tsitsani, 2012). Petitions are used as a powerful public tool to make an impact on society. It is a way for citizens to express their stance, opinions, views, and values about issues that concern them. Moreover, it is one of the ways citizens can actively participate in democracy.

The right to petition and the declines and resurgences of the tool's popularity vary across countries, cultures, and centuries, but two common characteristics stand out over the years: their written format and the simple cause-and-effect role that their signatures held. For years, petitions have taken a written form, necessitating change-seekers to collect signatures door to door. This collection of signatures was paramount to any awareness and success for the cause as a certain number of signatures was often required for the cause to be taken into consideration by the authority concerned (van Voss, 2010). Other times, a reached number of signatories would signify a reached goal and thus equate to definite action being taken, and change being made.

Although the existence of petitions dates back centuries, various scholars note how the past decades saw an unprecedented increase in the use of the tool credited to the introduction of the internet (e.g. Leston-Bandeira, 2019). Online petitions (E-petitions) are petitions founded through electronic channels. The internet development enabled activism that is politically mobilized at a global scale (Aragón, Sáez-Trumper, Hale, Gómez & Kaltenbrunner, 2018). The virtual aspect of petitions reconstructed participation limits, no longer confining petitions to the written format, and making geographic boundaries less relevant than before. The online environment facilitated a one-to-many mode of dissemination.

With the advent of the internet, the simple cause-and-effect role of petition signatures changed as well. Petitioners became less concerned with reaching a goal of signatures so as to enact change; but rather, began to take advantage of other benefits to petitioning, including raising awareness, putting issues of public interest on the political agenda, and driving the conversation surrounding those topics (Leston-Bandeira, 2019). Although petitions thus enabled a widening of participation boundaries, e-petitions have been criticised as part of the 'clicktivism' phenomenon with no real-life impact but only improving the participants' good feeling (Christensen, 2011; O'Connor, 2012; Aragón, Sáez-Trumper, Hale, Gómez & Kaltenbrunner, 2018). On the other hand, Leston-Bandeira's (2019) study about the UK parliament's e-petition system, shows that even though many petitions are rejected, they still play various important roles in the public participation sphere, ranging from linkage and campaigning to scrutiny and policy. Petitions can exhibit merely a linkage role symbolizing the direct relationship and often passage of information between the petitioners and the higher authoritative body they appeal to. Furthermore, petitions can facilitate a campaigning role through which a common goal is advocated and is able to bring people together. Moreover, a petition's role of scrutiny and policy are often interlinked: the former identifying and distinguishing worthwhile issues, and the latter actualizing real legislative impact (Leston-Bandeira, 2019). Although the impact of petitions in creating sustainable changes may be limited, at the very least they increase awareness and open up an avenue for exploring civic participation – a process that is also facilitated, and therefore enhanced, by social media.

1.4. Social Media

The daily use of social networks platforms has become a reality for most Europeans. In the first quarter of 2022, about 307 million people in Europe used Meta's Facebook daily. Facebook, as one of the most popular social networks has become a space for entertainment, self-expression, socializing, information seeking, and civic practices among users.

Facebook architecture provides many features to promote and simplify user's communication through group features, status update and wall to wall comments, photos and videos sharing, group chat, and many other options (boyd & Ellison, 2008). It is a common view that social networks and virtual communities create a networked public that enables the connection between individuals for the purpose of cultural and social activity. Papacharissi (2010), for example, believes that this technological convergence in everyday life develops "public private" and "private public" space for civic action. In this context, the explosion of social network platforms usage has raised several questions about whether, and how, the new form of communication contributes to citizens' participation in networked public space and the possibilities citizens have to create an arena for democratic action.

At the same time, daily usage of social networking services (SNS) among the population has increased scholarly interest in online participation. Many social researchers point out the need for redefinition of the concepts of public, political, and civic participation and participatory practice (Bennett, 2008). According to Bennett (2008), political action is much more personalized and locally determined. Citizens are mobilizing around specific political issues that require more personal forms of collective action. Examples of those forms can usually be seen on social networks like Facebook and Twitter.

To this end, we found that as we shift our focus of the second phase of data scraping towards online cultural conversations with more intention behind them, a shift in social media platform was apt as well. At first glance, Twitter appears as the platform that is more politically charged and invested in matters of policy. It is the place where people feel compelled to express their own perspective, opinions or stance on the trending matters of the day, albeit well-received by the like-minded or contested by those of opposing views. While that may be the case, Twitter as a platform inherently often lacks a personal element that can play a significant role in the dissemination and success of a petition. Facebook on the other hand represents a platform with a much more personal touch where people tend to be connected to their close personal social circles of family and friends, more than following celebrities or other opinion-leaders. At the same time, in recent years Facebook has increasingly adopted a more subtle political role in so far as it helps stir political agendas (e.g., during elections) and mobilize 'bubbles' of people sharing a common belief on any form of social issue. This is reiterated by Facebook's introduction of the Community Actions feature that launched in the United States in 2019, a tool allowing people to start a petition addressed to a body of authority right on their platform (Constine, 2019). Where Twitter as a platform may sometimes amount to projecting opinions and perspectives into a void, Facebook presents a platform that more effectively garners these opinions and shared beliefs into communities where people congregate around common goals and intentions. Earlier work on the democratic potential of Facebook shows the platform's various effects on online and offline civic engagement. Several studies reported positive effects of Facebook on political engagement. For example, Fezell et al. (2009) found that involvement in a political Facebook group correlated with higher levels of political engagement such as voting and interest in politics. For these reasons Facebook was deemed by the taskforce as the preferred online platform to pursue in light of our new focus.

1.5. Research Questions

In response to objective three in work package 5, i.e., the analysis of how Europeans express themselves online about culture through evaluative, conversational, and creative- productive modes, and thus to deepen our understanding of digital cultural participation, we are looking into the cultural issues that people raise their voices about in the digital realm, through e-petitions. To deepen our understanding of digital cultural participation, we are looking into the cultural issues that people raise their voices about in the digital realm, through e-petitions. We have established that Facebook plays a significant role in spreading and promoting e-petitions. Therefore, Facebook is a perfect entry point to investigate a diverse range of e-petitions hosted on different platforms. We formulated the following sub-research questions to guide our investigation:

- 1) To what extent are cultural issues addressed through petitions?
- 2) What kind of issues and themes are addressed?
- 3) How do these issues compare and differ between countries?
- 4) Which petitions on culture are trending and where?
- 5) Which government bodies or organisations are addressed in petitions related to culture?
- 6) Who are the people initiating, discussing, and signing these petitions, and how are these people related to each other?

1.6. Content and structure of this report

In the following chapters, we first outline the method of data scraping and the research design used to retrieve and analyse our data. Then, findings and results are presented in separate chapters for each country. Each country chapter discusses results on the main cultural themes that arise in the analysis of petitions. In addition, we present analyses of the petitioners and petition addressees; the platforms on which these petitions are hosted; the specific petitions and topics that are trending in the period before and during Covid-19 and the levels of engagement they have on Facebook via likes, shares, and comments. The final chapter discusses the country results comparatively, draws conclusions based on the country comparison and finally formulates several policy recommendations and lines for future research.

2. Methodology

2.1. Data Scraping

The data for this project was scraped from CrowdTangle, an online tool that gives access to large amounts of data from Facebook. Thus, each country team retrieved Facebook posts that were published between January 1 2018 and January 31, 2022 on Facebook pages with administrators located in the same country. Posts relevant to us were identified by the keyword “petition” in the respective language, so that any Facebook post mentioning the keyword was retrieved as a part of the country data set. This procedure yielded nine data sets with sizes presented in Table 1. Data sets produced by each country’ query were downloaded from CrowdTangle as .csv files.

Table 1- Data set size by country, before and after filtering.

Country	Total N	N after filtering
Croatia	1,699	547
Denmark	5,011	2,538
Finland	9,692	3,813
France	170,015	8,709
Netherlands	34,150	6,542
Serbia	7,510	no filtering
Spain	61,279	26,184
Switzerland	6,932	1,993
United Kingdom	201,898	69,634

2.2. Text data pre-processing

To ensure similar steps in the analysis across all countries, we used a script written with R. Both data cleaning and analysis were conducted using the same script (see skeleton code in Appendix Ch. 14). A skeleton script was developed, and each country team adjusted the script for their respective language and data as needed. The first pre-processing step was to identify posts relating to culture among the full data sets. To achieve this, a shared list of culture-related keywords was created (see Appendix Ch. 14 table 4), based on earlier research done within the research project. Utilizing this list, Facebook posts that contained any of the keywords were selected. In a next step, each country developed and used a second and shorter list of keywords that was more sensitive to the country specific language and context, to exclude posts that contained a culture-related keywords but were irrelevant for this research. The sizes of resulting data sets are presented in Table 1.

After excluding irrelevant posts, textual data cleaning steps were applied to the remaining data. Texts were cleaned from all non-alphabetical characters and turned into lowercase. After initial cleaning, lemmatization was conducted utilizing the R package udpipe (Wijffels, 2021), which offers an automatized

lemmatization function for each language found in our data. Udpipes also provides part-of-speech tagging, which was used to further clean the data, keeping only words that were classified as nouns, proper nouns, and adjectives. Words with less than three characters were discarded. Language-specific collections of stop words were used to further clean the data. Stop words refer to words that we want to exclude from the data, such as “and” or “it”, but also more contextual words that might be hard to interpret. These stop words were combined both from pre-defined lists and lists created by the researchers. For example, the words “petition” and “sign” are not very informative for the purpose of our analysis and were therefore included manually as stop words. After these cleaning steps, a document-term-matrix, was created and further filtered to contain only posts that had more than one word, and terms that had higher frequency than nine.

2.3. Analysis: Topic Modelling

In our analysis, we used topic modelling, which is a collection of algorithms suited for discovering hidden thematic structures in large collections of documents, by means of machine learning methods (DiMaggio et al., 2013). The aim of the analysis is to find latent topics, collections of words that are likely to appear in the same context. This method is a convenient technique to analyse a large number of text documents since it does not require qualitative coding (Jacobi, 2015). More specifically, we use latent Dirichlet allocation (LDA) (Blei, Ng, & Jordan, 2003), provided by R package topic models (Grün & Hornik, 2011).

With LDA, the number of topics to be extracted from the data need to be selected a priori by the researcher(s). This task can be difficult as there is no golden rule to choose the right number of topics. To determine the optimal number of topics for the model, we used both model evaluation metrics (e.g. fit statistics) and contextual evaluation of topics (i.e. semantic coherence). Thus, each country team created several different models with different numbers of topic and then selected the most suitable model based upon contextual evaluation.

3. Findings for Croatia

3.1. Facebook and petitions in Croatia

Facebook is the most used platform in Croatia. According to Statista¹, there were 2,544,000 Facebook users in Croatia in March 2021, which accounted for 62.5% of its entire population. A slight majority of them were women - 52.2%. People aged 25 to 34 were the largest user group (740,000). The most significant disparity in the number of men and women occurs in the age group from 35 to 44, where women lead by 240,000.

In the development of constitutional democracy citizens are enabled to directly address the state, i.e. its bodies, through the right to petition.

The right to petition in Croatia is regulated by the *Law on referendum and other forms of personal participation in performing state power and local and regional self-government*²:

“Citizens can submit petitions to the bodies of local self-government units, i.e., units of regional self-government and state authorities. The petition must be signed and must include the name and surname of the citizens and their personal identification number”.

“The state authority, local self-government body, or regional self-government body is obliged to respond to the citizens who submitted the petition within a reasonable period of time”.

“Citizens who have the right to vote can submit petitions. Citizen petitions are not legally binding for the body to which they are submitted”.

On a local level, The City Assembly must discuss a proposal or petition that is supported by the signature of at least 10% of the voters registered in the voter list and respond to the petitioners no later than three months after receiving the proposal or petition.

In Croatian context, online petitions are used as bottom-up citizen’s initiatives primarily aimed to call attention to a certain issue and to pressure the government bodies to deal with the raised topic. Here we analyse online petitions on Facebook, i.e. on social media platform where users can quickly generate and share petitions, or engage in certain citizens’ initiatives.

3.2. Data description

In this part of the research project, we continue our focus on European citizens’ understanding of the social value of culture. We follow a bottom-up approach, using data scraping techniques to collect online petitions focusing on culture on the Facebook platform. Guided by the main research questions on the number of such petitions and their popularity on Facebook (likes, shares, comments), as well as a description of petition topics during the studied four-year period (from the beginning of 2018 to the end of 2021), we collected data using the Crowdtangle platform. The chosen time frame yielded the possibility of taking the impact of COVID-19 into account in the analysis.

In the first phase of data scraping, the Croatian team scraped all posts featuring the word “petition” (“peticija” in the Croatian language) that were posted in Croatia in the specific time frame. The total number

1 <https://napoleoncat.com/stats/facebook-users-in-croatia/2021/03/> (10. 7. 2022)

2 <http://www.propisi.hr/print.php?id=5155> (10. 7. 2022)

of Facebook posts analysed was 1, 699. In the second phase the dataset was filtered using keyword list accepted by the taskforce members and enabling clearing of the posts not related to culture. Data filtering was also applied during the topic modelling analysis where we “cleared the noise” in the analysis. This noise consisted of words that were not helpful in the analysis, such as “day”, “good” or “hour”.

3.3. Petitions about culture

For data scraping we used the Crowdtangle platform. This process resulted with the 1,699 collected posts related to Facebook petitions. After data filtering, we kept only culture-related petitions. At that point we were left with 547 (32.2%) Facebook posts related to petitions about culture from 2018 until 2022.

The top eleven most frequent culture-related keywords (based on the keywords the task force team compiled) were “TV”, “school”, “sport”, “COVID”, “education”, “radio”, “society”, “history”, “restaurants”, “film” and “monument” (see Table 1). Such keywords predominantly reflect a more anthropological sense of culture, expressed in words like “education”, “society” or “school”. However culture in a more narrow sense is also present, reflected in words such as “film” and “TV”.

Table HZ - 1 - Top 10 most frequent keywords (based on keywords list)

Keyword	Frequency
TV	401
School	21
Sport	20
COVID	18
Education	18
Radio	18
Society	15
History	14
Restaurant	14
Film	13

We wanted to know more about popular culture-related petitions posted on Facebook, so we examined how many likes, comments and shares those posts had. Popularity on Facebook is defined by likes (which can be seen as a quick way of saying “I agree with you”), comments (which involve a little more commitment (as they include expressing own views on the topic), and shares (which are much more forceful actions, pushing the posts out to friends and followers).

So, what do likes, comments or shares say about culture-related petitions in Croatia? Posts in our full dataset on average have 32.63 comments, 131.26 likes and 17.29 shares. Culture-related posts received less comments (on average 19.53 comments), less likes (with average value of 99.20) but slightly more shares – on average 20.32 shared posts (see Table 2).

Table HZ - 2 - Facebook comments, likes and shares of all petitions and culture-related petitions

	All data	Filtered Data
Mean Comments	32.62603	19.53297
Mean Likes	131.25618	99.19963
Mean Shares	17.28681	20.31685
SD Comments	156.93681	67.50290
SD Likes	482.57237	266.48415
SD Shares	77.54026	63.87477

3.4. Topic modelling

The next step in exploring the data was topic modelling analysis using our filtered datasets. Taking into account indicators of the perplexity and coherence via LDA model we decided on the optimal number of topics (k). As a best exploratory solution describing the topics of petition-related posts on Facebook we chose the solution with eight topics (k=8). Our topic modelling analysis, yielded the following eight issues:

- 1) Municipal/community-based issues;
- 2) Ecology-based issues;
- 3) Education and welfare issues;
- 4) Social issues;
- 5) Economy issues;
- 6) COVID-19 and vaccines issues;
- 7) Animal rights issues; and
- 8) Judiciary issues and law issues

Topic 1 - Municipal/community-based issues included petitions by citizens' initiatives concerning local problems and urban planning issues. The most frequent words within this topic are "city", "citizens", "problem", "building", "project" and "street". Most of the petitions are focused on community matters in urban areas and problems with infrastructure planning. In such cases, the petitions are addressed to local councils more often than to national level institutions.

In topic 2 - Ecology-based issues we find words such as "environment", "green", "protection" and "water" as the most distinctive ones describing the content of this topic. Facebook posts about petitions related to this topic concern sustainability and environmental issues in the global and local contexts. We can also conclude that these petitions are mostly directed toward government institutions. Political parties and government ministers are most frequently mentioned actors in these topics.

Topic 3- Education and welfare issues concern the topics focusing on children's education and the school curriculum. This topic includes words such as "child", "school", "parent", "education" and "sex". In this context the most prominent discussions and actions were aiming at the initiatives to introduce sex education into the elementary school curriculum.

Topic 4- Social and cultural issues included Facebook petition posts focusing on individual stories reflecting problems of everyday life. They were represented with words such as "man", "life", "time", "house", "story" and "struggle". Since words like "history", "film" and "monument" are also included in the list, we can say that the petitions in this topic also concern some cultural issues.

In Topic 5- Economy issues, Facebook posts highlight specific economic problems of taxation and the transparency of spending taxpayers' money. Distinctive keywords in this topic include the “entrepreneur”, “public”, “tax”, “transparency” and “budget” and petitioners addressed the Ministry of Economy, the Prime Minister and the Parliament.

Topic 6 - COVID-19 and vaccination issues includes petitions that were initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic and addressing different measures that were induced as part of everyday life. Keywords associated with this topic are “vaccination”, “signature”, “pandemic” and “COVID-19” and the petitioners addressed European and national level institutions.

Topic 7- Animal rights issues concern petitions about animal rights. These petitions demand taking action against neglecting animals. The relevant keywords include “animal”, “law”, “chain”, “dog” and “pyrotechnic “. In these cases, petitioners also addressed European and national level institutions.

Topic 8- Judiciary issues and law issues involve petitions demanding changes in the Croatian judiciary system. Topic 8 includes keywords such as “election”, “Croatian”, as well as “president”, “judge”, and “Dobronić” (name of the judge appointed as new Supreme Court President in 2021). These petitions obviously relate to the tensions in the legal system and contain appeals to the Croatian Parliament to resolve the situation. Since the word such as “referendum”, “bars” and “musicians” are also included in the list, we can conclude that the petitions in this topic also reflect the reactions of different workers affected by COVID-19 measures – especially those in the hospitality sector and music industry, who demanded changes of working conditions in the pandemic period.

3.5. Petition platforms

As part of our analysis, we explored the most frequent platforms shared on Facebook through which people post petitions online (see Table 3). In Croatia the most frequently used websites were Peticija24.com, Change.org, and Peticijeonline.com. While Peticije24.com and Peticijeonline.com are websites with national character reflecting mainly local and national issues, Change.org is an international website containing petitions focused mostly on global issues.

It is interesting that in the Croatian case, petition organizers often use their own websites for posting their petitions. That is the reason why the

well-known petition platforms are less represented. Also, in-depth analysis of Facebook posts reveals that posts about petitions usually include news from different media platforms carrying the information about the petition in question and the number of signatures gathered

Table HZ - 3 - Most Common Petition Websites

Petition Address	N
www.peticija24.com	25
www.change.org	12
www.peticijeonline.com	9

3.6. Examination of trending petitions

In-depth examination of most trending petitions on Facebook gave us insights to the most popular topics on this social platform in terms of likes, comments and shares. In the following section we will compare petitions in two time periods: two years prior to the pandemic (2018-2020) and the two years of the pandemic (2020-2022).

In the Tables 4 and 5 we can find summarised description of the most popular petitions on Facebook containing their titles, initiator/s, addressees, the number of signatures they have received and the topic

we chose to associate them with in context of the topic modelling results.

Table HZ - 4 - Twenty Most Trending Petitions on Facebook 2018-2020

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Apology to the victims of war crimes committed during and after the military operation "Storm"	Youth initiative for human rights	To the representatives of the "Storm" victims'	07/24/2018	1,254	Topic 8 - Judiciary issues and law issues
Stop the new tax attack on citizens	NGO <i>Lipa</i> (association of taxpayers)	Government	07/08/2019	NA	Topic 5 - Economy issues
Stop the terror of Minister Divjak - terror of secularism and the suppression of Croatian traditions and values in Croatian schools	NGO <i>Vigilare</i>	Government, Prime Minister	10/28/2019	2,162	Topic 3 - School and welfare issues
Expulsion of Kolinda-Grabar Kitarović from the membership of HNK Rijeka	Fans of Croatian football club Rijeka	Croatian football club Rijeka	10/30/2019	1,272	Topic 4 – Social and cultural issues
I want the same rights - abolition of tolls on the Krk bridge	Private individual	Local government bodies	02/15/2020	11,803	Topic 1 – Municipal/community based issues
The Diary of Anne Frank' removed from the reading list	Private individual	N/A	02/13/2019	3,788	Topic 3 – Education and welfare issues
Whisper against firecrackers	ZOO City	N/A	01/05/2020	17,033	Topic 7 - Animal rights issues
The construction of a residential complex for Roma families in Zagreb's Pantovčak	http://www.generacijaobnove.hr	Local government bodies	06/28/2020	503	Topic 1 - Municipal/community based issues
Let's not allow the euthanasia of the dog Otto	Private individual	Veterinary inspections	4/11/2019	2,947	Topic 7 - Animal rights issues
Against the abolition of free Consumer Advice Centers	NGO Potrošački forum	The Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts	12/19/2018	4,149	Topic 5 - Economy issues
Stop 5G network in the Republic of Croatia	Private individual	EU Parliament/ HAKOM (Croatian Regulatory Authority for Network Industries)	02/15/2020	4,523	Topic 5 - Economy issues
No to plastic	Greenpeace Croatia	Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development	12/18/2018	15,000	Topic 2 - Ecology based issues
Parents of children with developmental disabilities demanding a salary instead of the social allowance	Parents carers	Minister of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy	4/9/2019	17,202	Topic 3 – Education and welfare issues
My birth - My Companion	NGO Roda	Ministry of Health	10/6/2018	12,066	Topic 3 – Education and welfare issues
Uljanik! Let's save Croatian shipbuilding	Private individuals	Open letter	01/17/2018	480	Topic 1 – Municipal/community-based issues

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Water in the Constitution - The Constitution protects water as a basic human right and public good	Bridge – independent list	Government and Parliament	08/23/2019	7,096	Topic 2 – Ecology based issues
The petition to build a memorial to Željko Mlajnar and Zvonimir Levačić-Ševa in Peščenica	Private individual	Local government bodies	04/02/2019	431	Topic 4– Social and cultural issues
Against the processing of hazardous and non-hazardous medical waste in Jastrebarsko	Private individual	N/A		1,184	Topic 2 – Ecology based issues
Against the devastation of the nature	Private individual	N/A	02/07/2020	673	Topic 2 – Ecology based issues
Let's stop the opening of a quarry in Glavice	Ne dajmo Gredu (citizens' initiative)	Ministry of Environmental Protection and Energy / County of Split-Dalmatia / City of Sinj	12/12/2019	2,338	Topic 1 – Municipal/community-based issues Topic 2 – Ecology based issues

Trending Facebook petitions presented in Table 4 show that most of the petitions were addressed to government bodies on a national level (such as the Government and the Parliament, the Prime Minister or ministers) or on a local level - Heads of City Councils.

Petitions are most often initiated through nongovernmental organizations, such as RODA (a group of interested citizens whose work is focusing on the areas of education for pregnant women, and parents), LIPA (association of taxpayers), VIGILARE (association focusing on promotion of Christian values and heritage), Greenpeace and so on. Seven petitions were initiated by private individuals.

In summary, topics that dominated during the two years prior to the pandemic focused on the issues of ecology (5 times), education and welfare (4 times), municipal/community-based issues (3 times), economy (3 times), animal rights (2 times), social and cultural issues (1 time) and judiciary and law (1 time).

It is interesting to see that most trending petitions are not the ones with the most of signatures collected. Despite trending on Facebook, most of the petitions did not reach their signature goals. However, some of them indeed initiated a debate in the public sphere and exerted public pressure on the government bodies demanding changes in certain areas.

Table HZ - 5 - Twenty-Five Most Trending Petitions on Facebook 2020-2022

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Petition to ensure the right of every child to stay with a parent during hospital treatment	NGO Roda	Ministry of Health	06/29/2020	60,911	Topic 3 - Education and welfare issues
Petition for the introduction of comprehensive sexuality education in schools as a compulsory subject	Portal Reci.hr	Government	02/01/2021	13,063	Topic 3 - Education and welfare issues

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Let's bring back the Rijeka-Dubrovnik shipping line!	Private Individual	Jadrolinija Ferry company	04/17/2021	2,953	Topic 1- Municipal/community based issues
COVID-19 - fundamental freedoms and rights of EU citizens	Private individual	EU Parliament	09/12/2021	N/A	Topic 6 – COVID-19 and vaccines issues
Request to Enable two-way traffic on the Bračak Bridge	Private individual	Local government	09/12/2021	1,846	Topic 1 – Municipal/community-based issues
Demand of transparency of all public bodies and organizations that are financed with taxpayers' money	NGO <i>Lipa</i> / NGO <i>Glas poduzetnika</i>	Government and Parliament	04/16/2020	2,0318	Topic 5 – Economy issues Topic 6 – COVID-19 and vaccines issues
Petition against the closure of the Caffe de Matoš in Mažuranac!	Private individual	The City Council	07/17/2021	2,150	Topic 1 – Municipal/community-based issues
Petition to save the creative industries	Association of music managers and organizers	Prime Minister, Government	07/24/2020	2,356	Topic 5 – Economy issues Topic 6 – COVID-19 and vaccines issues
Bans on keeping dogs on a chain	NGO-s for animal rights	Government, Minister of Agriculture	02/27/2021	6,0755	Topic 7- Animal issues
We are betting on Angels	Private individual	Super sport betting company	05/20/2020	1,810	Topic 4 - Social issues Topic 6 – COVID-19 and vaccines issues
FOR judge Radovan Dobronić! Let the citizens' voice be heard in the Croatian Parliament!	NGO <i>Franak</i>	Government and the Parliament	09/15/2021	3,275	Topic 8 – Judiciary issues and law issues
Petition for free pads and tampons in the Republic of Croatia	Private individual	Government	11/26/2021	288	Topic 3 – Education and welfare issues
Abandoning animals is a criminal offence	Friends of animals	Government and the Parliament	11/22/2021	10,000	Topic 7 – Animal rights issues
Petition for Equally Accessible, Safe and Quality Kindergarten for Every Child in Croatia	NGO <i>Sidro</i>	Ministry of Science and Education	06/24/2021	7,215	Topic 3 – Education and welfare issues
Strips for measuring blood sugar save lives!	Croatian Federation of Diabetic Associations	Croatian Institute for Health Insurance	06/02/2021	7,738	Topic -4 Social issues
We ask the Hzzo (Croatia Health Insurance Fund) to include glucagon in spray in the basic list of medicines	NGO <i>Cukrići Zadar</i>	Ministry of Health	11/22/2021	32,953	Topic -4 Social issues
Stop imposing homosexual ideology and promoting fake 'families' in Croatian society	NGO <i>Vigilare</i>	Croatian radio television/ President	05/01/2020	13,824	Topic 3 – Education and welfare issues

During the pandemic period trending Facebook petitions presented in the Table 5 show that most of the petitions were addressed to the government bodies on a national level (such as the Government and the

Parliament, the Prime Minister or ministers) and rarely to the government bodies on the local level.

Petitions are most often initiated through the nongovernmental organizations such as the ones focusing on children's welfare and health (NGO Roda, NGO Cukrić, NGO Sidro), economy problems (NGO Lipa, NGO Franak, Association of Music Managers and Organizers), animal rights and similar. In this period five petitions were launched by private individuals. The petitions in this period did reflect main public discussion in Croatia – some of them related directly to the pandemic and the restrictions concerning vaccinations, working conditions in different sectors, and economic issues. During the pandemic period, more petitions addressed issues concerning educational problems, health issues and hospital treatment problems..

In summary, topics that dominated the petitions during the two years of the pandemic were issues related to education and welfare (5 times), COVID-19 (4 times), municipal/community-based issues (3 times), economy (2 times), social and cultural issues (3 times), animal rights (2 times), and judiciary and law (1 time).

3.7. Discussion and conclusions

The analysis presented in this report is focused on Facebook posts related to petitions in two periods: before COVID-19 (from 2018-2020) and during COVID-19 pandemic (from 2020-2021).

Results presented above show that topics such as education and children's welfare, economic issues, community-based issues, animal rights and environmental matters were trending in the Facebook sphere, making these issues more visible to the general public.

In Croatia, online petitions were used as bottom-up citizens' initiatives primarily aimed to call attention to certain issues and to pressure the government bodies to deal with the raised topics. In this context social media platforms were used as platforms where users can quickly generate and share petitions. Namely, by using digital platforms the petitioners need less time to transmit information and have more opportunity to build a network of potential signatories. This is obviously supposed to enable other users to easily engage in the initiatives supported by the initiators of the petitions.

In this analysis, culture related petitions were not visible as a separate topic in topic modelling analysis. Thus, we were unable to determine to what degree culture in the narrow sense was represented in the overall petitions in Croatia in analysed period. However, some petitions about culture were launched in the pandemic period – most of them were about the restricted working conditions in the music and creative industry sectors. Finally, it should be said that in this report we mostly approached culture in a wider sense of the word, due to the nature of the culture-related petitions launcher in Croatia in the analyses period. Namely, these petitions were most often used to emphasise and engage with the issues related to community-based topics, children's education and welfare, as well as several other culture-related norms and values both on local and national level.

4. Findings for Denmark

4.1. Facebook and petitions in Denmark

Facebook is the most used social media platform in Denmark. In 2019, 77% of the Danish population had Facebook profiles, which surpasses other social media platforms by almost double (Agency for Culture and Palaces, 2020). 64% of Danes use Facebook daily or several times per day. Facebook has the largest share of older age groups on social media. 24% of those who have a profile on Facebook are 55-70 years and 10% are more than 71 years old. Only 9% of Facebook users in Denmark are between 12-18 years old (Ministry of Culture, 2021).

The word and phenomenon of petitions can be translated into two Danish words, “borgerforslag” (direct translation: citizen suggestion) and “underskrift(s)indsamling” (direct translation: signature collection). The two terms co-exist, and while the former has a more direct connection with the Danish parliament, the latter relates to general petitions that raise a variety of issues, not necessarily connected to parliamentary decision-making. “Borgerforslag” has a more recent history in Danish politics, as it was introduced around the time of our collected data (1 March 2018). For a “borgerforslag”, certain criteria need to be fulfilled:

All [Danish] citizens with the right to vote in parliamentary elections can submit a proposal on borgerforslag.dk if at least 3 people want to be co-sponsors of the proposal and it complies with the rules for the scheme. If 50,000 citizens with the right to vote in parliamentary elections then support the citizens' proposal, it can be submitted as a resolution, considered and voted on in the Folketing [Danish parliament]. (*Om borgerforslag.dk*, 2022)

By June 2022, a total of 1,323 petitions have been submitted on the official website borgerforslag.dk. Only five have been realized by parliament (Sandemand, 2021).

“Underskrift(s)indsamling” does not have such strict rules, as these initiatives do not directly lead to parliamentary processes.

4.2. Data description

Public Facebook posts between 1.1.2018 to 31.12.2021 were retrieved by using the two Danish language equivalents for the word “petition”. The Danish team decided to scrape posts including both the term “borgerforslag” (starting from 1 March 2018) and “underskrift(s)indsamling”, to better cover the meaning and use of petition in the Danish context. The two data sets were merged afterwards. After the merge, the data set consisted of 6,832 posts. This dataset was then filtered so that it would only contain posts related to the predefined keywords used by all INVENT-countries in this analysis. Furthermore, some country specific keywords were added. Those were: “gender” and “køn”. After this initial filtering, some words were excluded from the dataset, mostly words used in relation to animal rights (“dyrene”, “dyrevarnet”, “hvalpe”, “katte”, “kylling”, “peta”), fishing (“fiskeri”), and an ongoing public legal process/impeachment (“rigsret”). After this filtering and cleaning process, 2,538 posts were left, comprising the filtered data.

4.3. Petitions about culture

39%, or 2,538, of the 6,832 Facebook posts mentioning petitions in Danish from 2018 until 2022 were, as mentioned, deemed to be fit to be included in our computational model. Of the 110 keywords used, the top ten most frequent culture-related keywords are presented in Table DK-1. The most common keywords relate to culture in the wider sense. Petitions mentioning culture as arts and culture in the narrower sense also appear in the data set, yet not at high frequencies.

Table DK - 1 - Top 10 most frequent keywords (based on keywords list)

Keyword	Frequency
Kommune / commune	564
Social	426
Samfund / Society	338
Uddannelse / education	329
Skole / school	317
Grænse / border	239
Værdi / Value	238
Rejse / Trip / Travel	212
Historie / History	193
Corona + covid	114 + 33

Petitions relating to culture were, on average, *less* commented on (mean number of comments 27.3), liked (116.6) and shared (33.3), compared to the whole data set before filtering out cultural posts (mean comments: 43.7, mean likes: 140.4 and mean shares: 33.1, respectively).

4.4. Topic modelling

To uncover emerging themes among Facebook posts about petitions, topic modelling was conducted to the filtered and cleaned textual data. To determine the optimal number of topics for the model, both model evaluation metrics and contextual evaluation of topics were utilized. After careful consideration, a model with six topics was deemed to be a good cutoff between model complexity and interpretability of the topics. Given the number of analysed posts and petitions discussed in the time period, the number of topics reflects the rather small data set. The six topics cover discussions about petitions from a wide range of perspectives, varying from political actors and aspects to specific petitions, e.g., organ donation, rights of asylum seekers, and education. Since this analysis also concerns the differences between “borgerforslag” and “underskriftindsamling”, some of the topics demonstrate this very terminological issue and show different words appearing most frequently in connection with one of the two Danish terms for “petition”. Topic 3 directly addresses “underskriftindsamling”, whereas topics 1, 4, and 5 relate to “borgerforslag”. Two topics (2 and 6) do not directly address either of the concepts, so it can be concluded that they relate to the overall concept of “petition”. This clearly reflects the weight that “borgerforslag” has in this sample.

The six topics were labeled with the following titles:

- 1) Danish political agendas
- 2) Children welfare, immigration issues
- 3) Local, citizen-based issues
- 4) Health and work issues
- 5) Cultural and political tensions
- 6) National issues

Description of the six topics

The following topics include different concepts and address different aspects of the research question, pertaining to the “what”, “who” and “how” questions of cultural petitions and their online discourse. For each topic, those three main elements are described. Especially topics 2 and 5 include the specific petition contents and matters. We can see overlaps between topics 2 and 6, as they both include refugee and asylum seekers’ issues.

Topic 1 What: Danish political agendas: sustainability and “green” issues. **Who:** different Danish parties. **How:** Via borgerforslag.

Words include “party”, “borgerforslag”, “political”, “green”, “politician”, “Danish”, “Folketing” (the parliament), “world”. This topic describes overall political agendas, and a focus on a “green” way of life. This includes both climate issues and vegetarian food alternatives at public places.

Topic 2 What: Children welfare, immigration issues. **Who:** not addressed. **How:** not mentioned.

Words include “child”, “parent”, “young”, “life”, “family”, “future”, “asylum children”, “Sjælsmark” (a so called “return centre” for rejected asylum seekers) and “people’s movement”. The last word refers to the driving force behind the campaign. Here, the theme of children welfare, asylum seekers’ rights, and family issues are at the centre of the topic.

Topic 3 What: Local, citizen-based issues. **Who:** Municipality. **How:** Underskriftindsamling.

Words include “underskriftindsamling”, “citizen”, “municipality”, “Enhedslisten” (The Green-Red Alliance, a left-wing political party), “city council”, “Copenhagen”, “area”, “possibility”, “nature”, “local”. In this topic, the actors involved in such petition processes seem to be of most importance: citizens, municipality, and the city council. The overall theme describes issues related to local areas and nature to be protected.

Topic 4 What: Health and work issues. **Who:** Municipality. **How:** borgerforslag.

Words include “municipality”, “borgerforslag”, “help”, “sick”, “case”, “human”, “focus”, “treatment”, “work”, “social”, “handicap area”. This topic clearly is defined by issues related to health and work/the labour market, in connection with rights and areas of responsibility in the public sector.

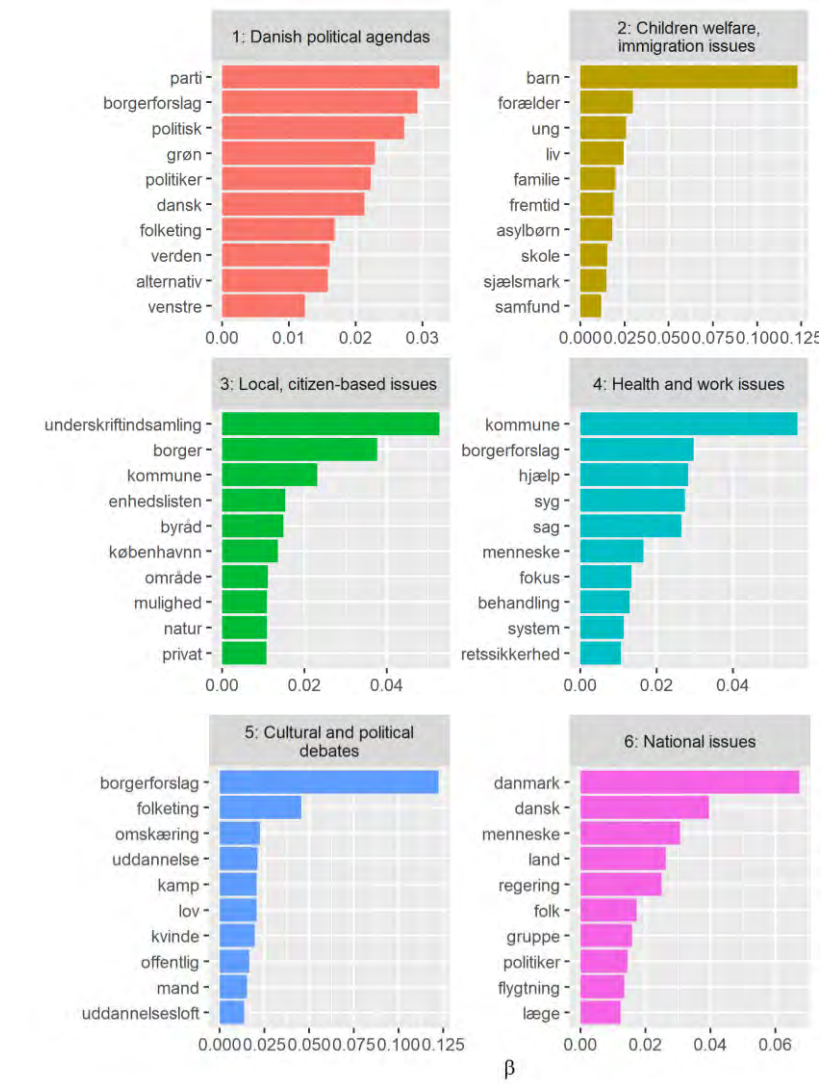
Topic 5 What: Cultural and political tensions . **Who:** Parliament **How:** Borgerforslag.

Words include “borgerforslag”, “Folketing” (the parliament), “circumcision”, “education”, “fight”, “law”, “woman”, “public”, “man”, “educational ceiling”, “vote”. This topic describes a variety of issues discussed in relation to borgerforslag, on a more national level. These are also themes, which are being publicly discussed.

Topic 6 What: National issues. **Who:** Government. **How:** not mentioned.

Words include “Denmark”, “Danish”, “human”, “country”, “government”, “people”, “group”, “politician”, “refugee”, “doctor”, “organ donation”. This topic seems to overlap with topics 1 and 5. Here, though, the focus is more on the Danish national perspective, on the citizens, and some of the individual actors involved in the petitions, such as refugees and medical doctors.

Figure DK - 1 - Six topics found from the Danish data.



4.5. Petition platforms

To examine the most frequently used petition platforms, we extracted the URLs from all Facebook posts in our sample. Table DK-3 displays the most frequently used URLs. The number of links included is rather low compared to the total number of posts. Most likely, this means that links to petitions are not explicitly written in posts but rather embedded in other text and thus not directly visible to users. Many posts mention petitions but might not directly

link to them (the links might be included in the comments, or an image, or a related post). As can be seen in table DK-3, there are only two main petition sites in Denmark, namely **borgerforslag.dk** and **skrivunder.net**. These sites respectively are platforms for parliamentary petitions hosted by the Danish parliament (Folketinget) and general petitions. Skrivunder.net is the Danish version of the international online portal petitions.net.

Table DK - 2- Most common petition websites

Petition Address	N
NA	1421
borgerforslag.dk	452
skrivunder.net	98

4.6. Examination of trending petitions

Next, to achieve a deeper understanding of trending petitions relating to culture in Denmark from 2018 to 2021, we analyse and present the 50 most trending petitions. Most trending was calculated based on the original post's likes, comments, and shares. Many petitions were mentioned by several posts and only one of them was chosen for these following lists.

The petitions are separated according to whether they were posted before the COVID-19-crisis, presented in table DK-4, or during the COVID-19 crisis, presented in table DK-5, separated by the date 1 March 2020.

Table DK - 3 - Top trending petitions related to culture in Denmark January 2018- March 2020

Meeting or petition	Translation of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressees	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Forslag om at afskaffe uddannelsesloftet!	Proposal to abolish the "educational ceiling"!	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	26-01-2018	54,191 / 50,000	5
Afviste asylbørn skal tildeles bedre vilkår i hjem- og udrejsecentre og midlertidig opholdstilladelse senest 18 mdr. efter endeligt afslag	Rejected asylum children must be granted better conditions in home and return centers and a temporary residence permit no later than 18 months after final refusal	Private individual / Anonymous	10-12-2018		56,129 / 50,000	2
Respekter borgernes fravalg af halal kød.	Respect citizens' opt-out of halal meat.	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	14-09-2018	2,41 / 50,000	5
Automatisk organdonor fra man fylder 18 år!	Automatic organ donor from the age of 18!	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	02-03-2018	61,348 / 50,000	4
Indførelse af 18 års mindstealder for omskæring af raske børn	Introduction of a minimum age of 18 for circumcision of healthy children	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	01-02-2018	54,157 / 50,000	4
Dansk klimalov nu	Danish climate law now	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	16-01-2019	68,670 / 50,000	1
Grøn mad i alle offentlige køkkener	Green food in all public kitchens	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	30-01-2018	12,344 / 50,000	1
Fjernelse af gensidig forsørgerpligt for alle	Removal of mutual maintenance (financial responsibilities by marriage) for all	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	28-08-2019	70,338 / 50,000	5
Ophæv maskeringsforbuddet, der trådte i kraft d. 1. august 2018	Repeal the masking ban, which came into force on 1 August 2018	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	05-09-2018	8,493 / 50,000	5
Bevar FM4 (idag Radio24syv) som den er i dag.	Keep FM4 (today Radio24syv) as it is today.	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	03-04-2019	30,543 / 50,000	5

Meeting or petition	Translation of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressees	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Statsborgerskab til unge mennesker, som er født og opvokset i Danmark - indfødsret ved erklæringsafgivelse	Citizenship for young people born and raised in Denmark - citizenship by declaration	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	30-01-2018	6,263 / 50,000	6
Rigsfællesskabet på skoleskemaet	The Danish Commonwealth on the school schedule	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	05-09-2018	2,331 / 50,000	5
Danske statsborgere skal kunne bo i Danmark med deres familie på samme vilkår som EU-borgere.	Danish citizens must be able to live in Denmark with their family on the same terms as EU citizens.	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	14-10-2018	10,505 / 50,000	6
Skal musik og kultur forbydes i København?	Should music and culture be banned in Copenhagen?	Strøm, Jazz Festival, Maraton, Pride, CPH:DOX, CPH PIX, Distortion, Golden Days, Kulturnatten, RFRS	N/A	04-06-2018	27,231	5
Totalforbud mod salg og anvendelse af fyrværkeri for private	Total ban on the sale and use of fireworks for private individuals	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	06-01-2020	9,472 / 50,000	?
Ændring af voldtægtsparagraffen til fokus på samtykke	Amendment of the rape clause to focus on consent	Everyday Sexism Project Danmark	N/A	2017	2,730	5
FINGRENE VÆK FRA LEJERNES PENGE	HANDS OFF THE TENANTS' MONEY	Private individual / Anonymous	N/A	05-03-2018	19,309	?
Borgerforslaget DROP 5G	Citizens' proposal DROP 5G	Private individual / Anonymous	N/A	03-04-2019	1,551	5
Bevar P8 Jazz	Preserve P8 Jazz	Private individual / Anonymous	N/A	29-11-2018	5,112	6
Luk de danske grænser NU!	Close the Danish borders NOW!	Private individual / Anonymous	N/A	2015	18,493	3
Underskriftindsamling for at stoppe de kommende besparelser på 25% i Klub 85	Signature collection to stop the upcoming 25% savings in Klub 85	Private individual / Anonymous	Mayor	01-11-2018	469	5
Legalisering cannabis	Legalization of cannabis	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	12-02-2018	11,306 / 50,000	5

Short summary of the petitions before corona

Most petitions are directed at the parliament via borgerforslag.dk. Since this online petition platform only started in March 2018, petitions before this date are from skrivunder.net. Some of these had been initiated

years ago, however their cause seems to be of continued relevance to the supporters, so the posts are still trending. Out of the petitions directed to the parliament, only six reached the 50.000 signatures limit. The petition reaching the most signatures relates to financial legal obligations between married partners. The climate law petition was realized by the Danish parliament in 2020.

The overall themes of the petitions range broadly from education to health-related issues (e.g., organ donation), to asylum seekers' rights and living conditions, to legal changes in relation to rape cases, to cultural life and institutions in Copenhagen. Culturally and religious sensitive topics such as circumcision and halal meat are also included, where the role of the petition is to influence legal rights and restrictions both in favour of and against minorities.

Petitions that address cultural institutions, such as preventing the closure of a Danish radio station, did not meet the signature goal.

In summary, the petitions dominantly concern issues of a social, political, health and legal nature, or culture and society in the broad sense. Some concern general issues pertaining to the whole population, such as climate, vegetarian food alternatives, education, organ donation. Some petitions demand more rights for specific social groups (e.g., refugees, citizenship seekers, victims of sexual assault, vegetarians), whereas others specifically aim for more restrictions (e.g., halal meat, circumcision, close the borders).

Table DK - 4 - Top trending petitions related to culture in Denmark April 2020 – December 2021

Meeting or petition	Translation of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressees	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Alle skal have ret og adgang til egne penge	Everyone must have the right and access to their own money	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	14-04-2021	17,699/ 50,000	4
Ansvarspådragelse for skoler	Liability for schools	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	21-09-2020	1,910 / 50,000	5
Ændring af lovgivning for hadforbrydelser i Danmark	Change of legislation against hate crimes in Denmark	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	28-02-2021	51,330/ 50,000	6
Sagsbehandlingsgaranti med nationale tidsfrister og tværfaglig kvalitet i sagsbehandlingen for syge.	Case processing guarantee with national deadlines and interdisciplinary quality in case processing for patients.	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	11-11-2020	55,125/ 50,000	4
Forslag til lov der forbyder krav om vaccinepas/vaccine status indenfor Danmarks grænser.	Proposal for law prohibiting requirements for vaccine passports / vaccine status within Denmark's borders.	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	14-12-2020	47,951/ 50,000	6

Meeting or petition	Translation of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressees	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Obligatorisk og lovpligtig mærkning af halalcertificerede varer og ydelser, samt kontrol med hvem der kan certificere og pengestrømme.	Mandatory and statutory labeling of halal-certified goods and services, as well as control of who can certify and cash flows.	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	03-02-2020	4,297/ 50,000	5
Forslag til en mere human og solidarisk flygtningepolitik i Danmark	Proposal for a more humane and solidaric refugee policy in Denmark	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	01-03-2021	51,150/ 50,000	2 / 6
En god afslutning til 3.g'erne	A good graduation for high school graduates	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	04-01-2021	50,746/ 50,000	5
Stop tilbagesendelsen af syriske flygtninge til farlige og usikre forhold	Stop the return of Syrian refugees to dangerous and insecure conditions	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	22-04-2021	56,602/ 50,000	2 / 6
Ophæv Tjenestemandsofformen fra 1969 - skab ligestilling i lønforholdet mellem offentlige faggrupper.	Repeal the Civil Service Reform from 1969 - create equality in the pay relationship between public professional groups.	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	08-03-2021	66,066/ 50,000	4
Ophæv loven om nedrivning og salg af almene boliger og afskaf de såkaldte "ghettolister"	Repeal the law on demolition and sale of public housing and abolish the so-called "ghetto lists"	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	16-06-2020	55,913/ 50,000	3 / 5
Handicapområdet skal væk fra kommunerne	The disability field must be removed from the municipalities	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	10-08-2020	53,255/ 50,000	4
Afskaf racismeparagraffen	Abolish the racism clause	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament		4,490/ 50,000	6
Stop forbud imod bare maver i SDU Fitness!	Stop the banning of bare stomachs in SDU Fitness!	Private individual / Anonymous	N/A	2021	704	3 / 5
Forlængelse af nedfrysning af befrugtede og ubefrugtede æg	Prolongation of the freezing of fertilized and unfertilized eggs	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	05-05-2020	56,656/ 50,000	4
Bevar de private børnehaver	Preserve the private kindergartens	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	14-03-2021	14,419/ 50,000	5
Adskillelse af personregistrering og Folkekirken	Separation of personal registration and the Danish National	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	01-02-2021	5,803/ 50,000	6

Meeting or petition	Translation of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressees	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
	Church					
Altid udvisning ved første lovovertrædelse	Always deportation at first offense	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	12-07-2021	383/ 50,000	6
Støt op om FINGERBØL Hadsund's facadefarve.	Support FINGERBØL Hadsund's facade color.	Private individual / Anonymous	Municipality	07-01-2021	612	3
Sorgorlov når man mister et barn 0-18 år	Grief leave when you lose a child 0-18 years	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	20-12-2019	67,088/ 50,000	4
Mænd der ved at vi har et problem med sexisme og vil gøre noget ved det.	Men who know we have a problem with sexism and want to do something about it.	Private individual / Anonymous	N/A	09-11-2020	696	5
Flere kvindelige forfattere på dansk litteraturs kanon for folkeskolen	More female authors on the canon of Danish literature for primary and lower secondary school	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	28-10-2020	849/ 50,000	5
Ny officiel navngivning af farven, der kun er kendt som "hudfarvet"	New official naming of the color known only as "skin color"	Private individual / Anonymous	Parliament	16-06-2020	276/ 50,000	5

Short summary of the petitions during the COVID-19 pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the petitions are still varied, and some of the petition topics from before the pandemic seem to continue playing a big role. The number of petitions directly relating to the pandemic and the restrictions is low, however. The only two petitions concerning COVID-19 directly are about high school students' conditions for having their graduation and mandatory vaccine passes.

The petitions do, however, capture some of the main public discussions during this time in Denmark. More petitions than in the previous period address issues such as hate crimes, sexism, and racism. Other trending petitions address topics such as bullying and mental health at schools and civil service reform for health workers. The rights of asylum seekers and refugees is still one of the most prevalent concerns.

Socio-economic issues, which are also related to discrimination, are for example so called "Ghetto lists" of certain housing areas in Denmark.

10 out of these trending petitions reached the 50.000 signatures goal. The petition with the most signatures, "Grief leave when you lose a child 0-18 years", was later realized and executed after being taken up by parliament.

4.7. Discussion and conclusions

The Danish Data Scraping as well as analysis of petitions on official Facebook pages in the period 2018 to 2021 support a broad understanding of culture beyond the narrow "arts and culture" definition. The collected Facebook posts and their connected petitions have a strong focus on human rights and on social problems in Danish society, and seek justice for specific, often minority or vulnerable groups of people

within the society. Petitions also serve as material for public debates about cultural and religious dilemmas such as circumcision. These can also be related to *national cultural values*, where petitions are used to discuss the boundaries of cultural norms and values.

In most of the Facebook posts, the petitions were supported and pushed by organizations, politicians, and other public figures. While the actual petitions are mostly anonymous, the promotion of a cause is often connected to the bigger agendas of such public organisations and individuals.

A sub question in the Danish approach involved exploring whether differences could be found between petitions in the sense of “borgerforslag” and “underskriftindsamling”. With “borgerforslag” being defined as a more direct way for registered citizens to address the parliament, such petitions have been characterized by a more general, national manner. “Underskriftindsamling” also included causes which addressed municipalities and mayors.

Although “underskriftindsamling” should be broader and more open towards any kind of petition, the sample was smaller and contributed only to a limited degree to the understanding of petitions in the Danish context.

It could not be determined to what degree culture in the sense of “arts and culture” was represented in the overall petitions in Denmark, as this analysis focused on the petitions that were the most trending on Facebook. However, this sample might give a good indication of who promotes petitions most and for what causes.

Looking at how culture is discussed through the lens of petitions in Denmark, we can conclude that petitions are used to highlight and fight perceived injustices in connection with human rights, social justice, health issues, cultural offers, and national norms and values.

Policy recommendations

This analysis of the Facebook posts as well as the mentioned petitions has overall shown a variety of subjects related to culture in a broad sense, which were of importance during the four years of collected data. Most petitions have clearly reflected topics which were being discussed in public forums like the news media during this time. Thus, the petitions seem to give citizens and groups of engaged people a voice, a platform to utter their criticism, appeal for change, or lack of satisfaction with how things are at the given moment. For politicians, petitions could be an important tool to take stock of what the public finds important at a specific point in time.

6. Findings for Finland

5.1. Facebook in Finland

In Finland, Facebook is the most used social media platform. According to the Statistics Finland, 58 % of 16-89-year old people used Facebook in 2022. Facebook usage was more prevalent among women than men. Apart from the youngest age group of 16-24-old people, Facebook was the most used social media service in every age group, and far most used platform among older age groups, for example, among 65-74-year-old people, of whom 42 % used Facebook during last three months. (Statistics Finland, 2020.)

5.2. Data description

By utilizing CrowdTangle data scraping tool, **9692** Facebook posts from 1.1.2018 to 31.12.2021 were retrieved by using Finnish language equivalent for the words petition, "aloite". For Finnish Data, the default keywords list compiled together with the research team was found out to be suitable. Thus, a comprehensive list of 111 keyword relating to different aspects of culture, determined by previous research done within research project, were used to detect Facebook post that were dealing with culture in wide sense. After applying the keyword list to filter the data, **3813** posts were determined to be discussing on culture.

5.3. Petitions about culture

As mentioned earlier, a total of 9692 Facebook posts discussing about petitions in Finnish language from 2018 until 2022 were retrieved, of which 3813, or 39 %, were deemed to be fit to include in our computational model. The top ten most frequent culture-related keywords are presented in Table FI-1. Most common keywords relate to culture in wide sense. Petitions mentioning areas of artistic culture are scarce but can be found.

Table FI - 1 - Top 10 most frequent keywords (based on keywords list)

Keyword	Frequency
School	984
Value/valuable	903
Customs	745
Border	437
Town square	290
History	284
Education	252
Covid	243
Show/proposal	239
Trip	236

Petitions relating to culture were, in average, more commented (mean of number of comments 17.3), liked (112.1) and shared (16.3), compared to whole data (15.9, 94.4 and 14.1, respectively).

5.4. Topic modelling

To uncover emerging themes among Facebook posts about petitions, topic modelling was conducted to the filtered and cleaned textual data. To determine the optimal number of topics for the model, both model evaluation metrics and contextual evaluation of topics were utilized. After careful consideration, model with 13 topics were deemed to be a good cut-off between model complexity and interpretability of the topics. These 13 topics cover discussion about petitions from wide range of themes, varying from conservation of Finnish nature to promoting inclusivity and cultural events. Seven first topics are presented in figure FI-1 and remaining six topics are presented in figure FI-2.

The first topic found from the Facebook posts is **conservation of Finnish nature**. In this topic, issues relating to Finnish forests and nature and its conservation are discussed. Important words include forest, Finland, nature, government, shared and diversity.

The second topic is relating to various citizen petitions, campaigning for diverse set of issues. This topic is labelled as **citizen campaigning**. Issues discussed in topic include cannabis legalization, banning fireworks and animal rights. Important words include border/limit, Finland, animal, human, fireworks, cannabis, campaign and harm.

The third topic is **health and social care**. In this topic petitions relating to mental health and child welfare are prevalent. Important words include problem, service, care, assistance, mental health and need.

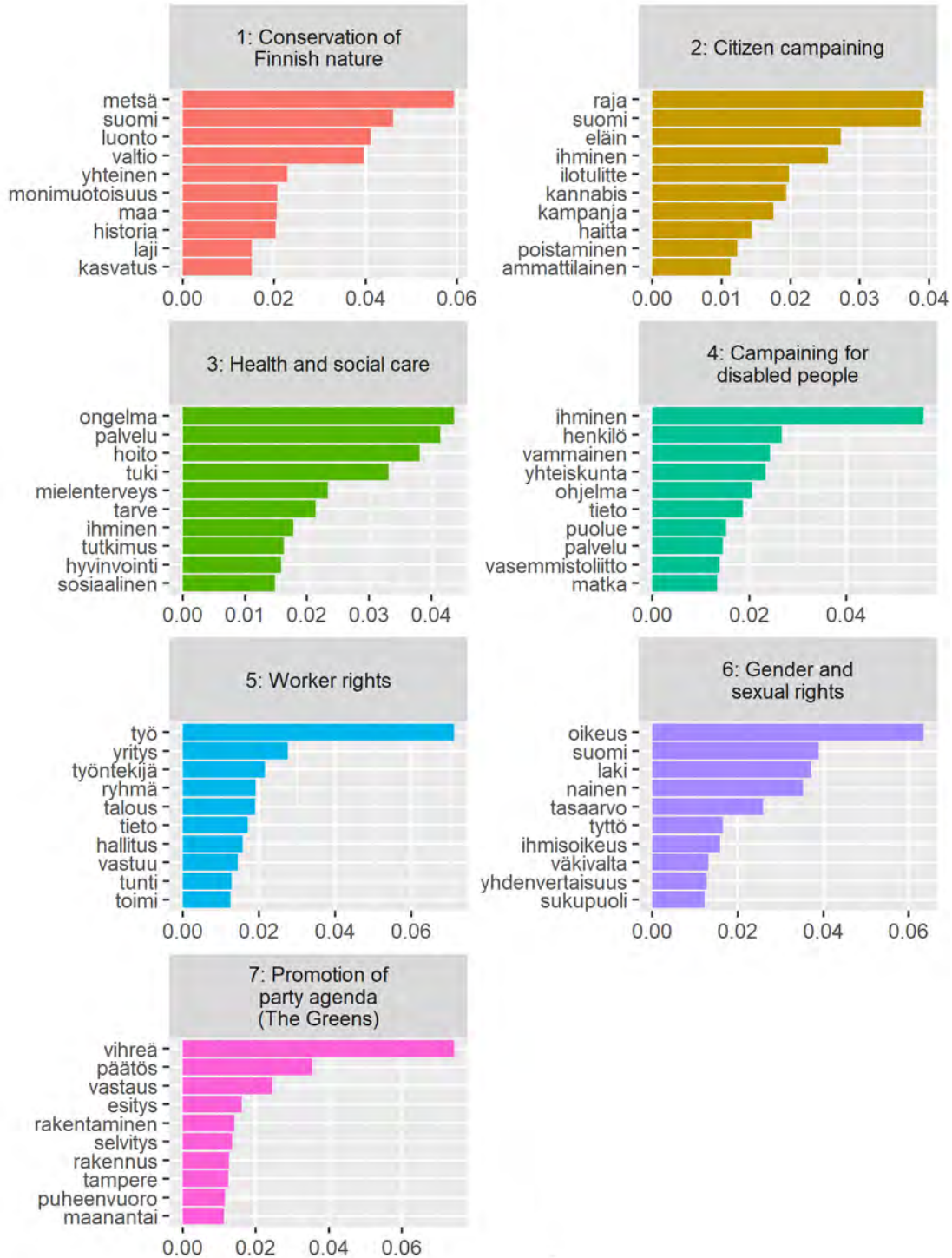
The fourth topic is labelled as **campaigning for disabled people**. In this topic, petitions relating to disabled people rights are promoted. Important words include human, person, disabled, society, program, service and accessibility.

In the fifth topic, issues relating to **worker rights** are discussed. Views for the discussion is presented from both labour and entrepreneur perspectives. Important words include work, company, worker, group and economy. In this topic, covid is also among the most important words.

The sixth topic is labelled as **gender and sexual rights**. In this topic, petitions relating to sexual violence definitions and punishments are discussed, along with gender and sexual minority rights. Important words include justice, Finland, law, woman, equality, girl, human rights, violence, gender and self-determination.

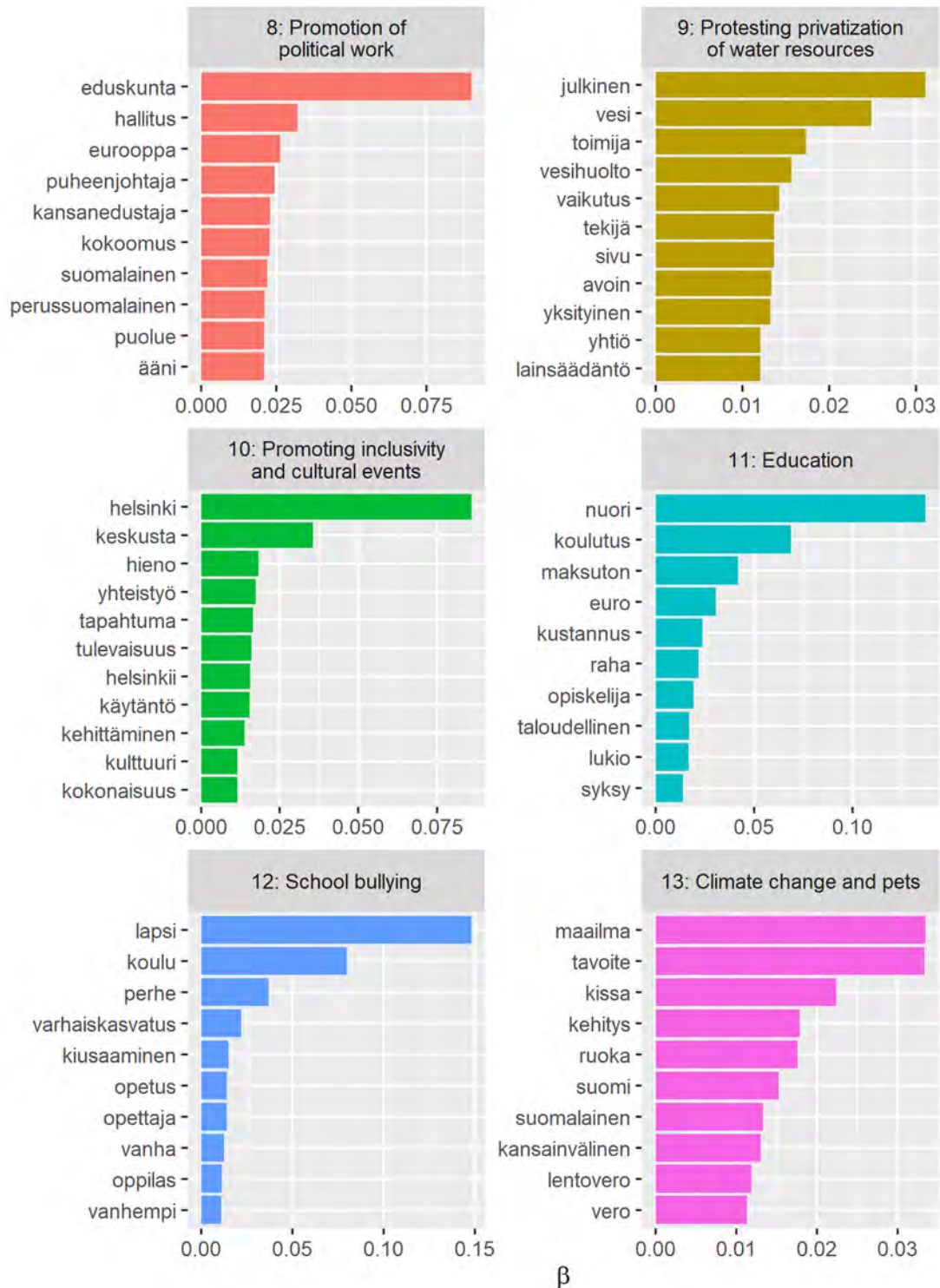
The seventh topic composes from petitions and motions from single party, The Greens. In this topic, **political work done by The Greens party** is promoted. Important words include green, decision, answer, proposal, building, and report.

Figure FI - 1- First seven topics found from the Finnish data. 10 words for each topic with highest Beta value. Beta represents the probability for a word to stem from corresponding topic. Notice different values on the x-axis.



β

Figure FI - 2 - Remaining six topics found from the Finnish data. 10 words for each topic with highest Beta value. Beta represents the probability for a word to stem from corresponding topic. Notice different values on the x-axis.



In topic number eight, similarly to previous topic, **promotion of Political work** is performed. Important words include parliament, government, Europe, chairperson and representative.

Topic number nine is relating to petitions **protesting privatization of water reserves**. In this topic, petitions to ban privatization of Finnish national water reserves are promoted and discussed. Important words include public, water, agent, water supply, open, private, company and legislation.

The tenth topic is **promoting inclusivity and cultural events**, mostly in Finnish capital Helsinki area. In this topic, ideas to promote more inclusive city with cultural offerings are discussed. Some of the most important words include, in addition to Helsinki and city centre, event, future, development and culture.

The eleventh topic promotes petitions relating to **education**. In this topic, especially petitions related to free and inclusive education for secondary school are discussed. Important words include young, education, free, euro, expense, money and student.

The twelfth Topic promotes petitions against **school bullying**. Important words include child, school, family, bullying, school bullying and safe.

The thirteenth topic is composed of two distinct themes: **climate change and pets**. In this topic, both petitions towards both controlling and protecting pets and actions towards reducing carbon footprint are discussed. Important words include world, objective, cat, improvement, food, Finland, international, flying tax and climate change.

5.5. Petition platforms

In Finnish data, the major target for petitions is www.kansalaisaloite.fi³ an online service of Ministry of justice for launching citizens' initiatives and collecting supports for these petitions. These petitions are targeted towards Finnish Parliament; if 50 000 signatures are found before deadline, the initiative is considered by the Parliament. Another frequent target for petitions is local government⁴. Together these two compose the main targets for petitions in Finland; they are mentioned 769 and 48, respectively, in the filtered data. After these two targets for petitions, no frequent petitions sites are found. It seems that Finnish Facebook users do not promote petitions in international platforms.

5.6. Examination of trending petitions

Next, to achieve deeper understanding of trending petitions relating to culture in Finland during 2018-2021, we analyse and present 50 most trending petitions. The petitions are separated according to whether they were posted before, presented in table FI-2, or during, presented in table FI-3, Covid-19 crisis, separated by date 1.3.2020.

Before the pandemic, many of the most trending petitions were addressing problems in schools, with topics such as promoting against school bullying and promoting education. Campaigning for different causes were done by citizens, for example, to ban fireworks, decriminalizing cannabis use and promoting alternative medicine and treatments. Gender and sexual rights were considered in two petitions, for example, to improve maternity law. Climate change was addressed by proposing additional tax for flying. On municipal level, petition to build a better football stadium was initiated.

³ <https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/ohjeet/briefly-in-english>

⁴ reached from <https://www.kuntalaisaloite.fi/fi/ohjeet/kuntalaisaloite-lyhyesti> (not available in English)

Table FI - 2 - Top x trending petitions related to culture initiated before 1.3.2020. Majority of petitions are directed towards the Parliament. For these petitions, the threshold of signatures for to be considered in the Parliament is 50000.

Petition name	Translation	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressees	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic	URL
Lasten ja nuorten syrjäytymiseen johtaviin ongelmiin puuttuminen alakouluissa	Addressing the problem of marginalization of children and young people in primary schools	Politician	Parliament	20.11.2018	52 603	School bullying	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/3549
Perintö- ja lahjaverosta luopuminen	Waiver of inheritance and gift tax	Citizen	Parliament	6.11.2017	57 489		https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/2665
Lakialoite avohakkuiden lopettamiseksi valtion mailla	Initiative to end deforestation on state-owned land	Citizens	Parliament	17.5.2018	50 698	Conservation of Finnish nature	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/3184
Lakialoite F2 ja F3 luokkiin kuuluvien pyroteknisten tuotteiden käytön rajoittamiseksi	Legislative initiative to restrict the use of pyrotechnic products in categories F2 and F3	Citizens	Parliament	4.12.2018	65 491	Citizen campaigning	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/3573
Maksuton toisen asteen koulutus kaikille	Free secondary education for everyone	Citizens	Parliament	18.9.2017	53 098	Promoting free education	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/2607
Äitiyslaki	Maternity law	Citizens	Parliament	28.11.2015	55 707	Gender and sexual rights	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/1669
Vesi on meidän - kansalaisaloite vesihuollon yksityistämisen estämiseksi	Water is our citizens' -initiative to prevent the privatization of water supply	Citizens	Parliament	31.1.2020	89 179	Protesting privatization of water	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/5966
Terapiatakuu mielenterveyspalveluihin pääsyn nopeuttamiseksi	The therapy guarantees to speed up reaching the mental health services	Citizens	Parliament	20.2.2019	52 107	Mental- and social care campaigning	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/3890
Reilun ruuan vero	Fair food tax	Politician	Parliament	1.9.2018	765	Climate change and pets	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/3312

Petition name	Translation	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressees	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic	URL
Tyttöjen sukuelinten silpomisen kieltäminen	Prohibition of female genital mutilation	Citizen	Parliament	2.4.2018	61 266	Gender and sexual rights	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/3056
Lentovero	Flight tax	Citizens	Parliament	2.5.2019	54 018	Climate change and pets	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/4252
Työmarkkinajärjestöjen jäsenmaksujen ja työttömyyskassamaksujen verovähennyskelpoisuudesta luovuttava	Abandon tax deductibility of membership fees and unemployment insurance contributions for labor market organizations	Politician	Parliament	24.9.2018	8 587	Campaigning for disabled people	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/3354
Kansalaisaloite Kannabiksen käytön rangaistavuuden poistamiseksi	Citizens' initiative to remove punishments for cannabis use	Citizens	Parliament	1.5.2019	55 634	Citizen campaigning	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/4360
Kotitalousopetuksen määrää perusopetuksessa on nostettava nykyisestä niin, että 9. vuosiluokalle lisätään kaikille yhteinen, pakollinen kotitalous	The amount of household education in basic education must be increased from the current level so that a common, compulsory household education is added to the 9th grade.	Citizens	Parliament	3.2.2020	1 428	School bullying	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/5969
Seksuaalirikoksesta suomessa tuomitun oleskeluluvan peruuttaminen ja karkoitus	Revocation and expulsion of a residence permit for convicted sexual offenders in Finland	Citizen	Parliament	6.12.2018	118 374	Citizen campaigning	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/3605
Keskuskentän jalkapallostadionin loppuun rakentaminen	Construction of a football stadium	Citizens	City government	23.11.2019	2781	Citizen campaigning	https://kuntalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/12352
Verkkokalastus kiellettävä saimaannorpan levinneisyysalueella	Net fishing shall be prohibited in the range of the Saimaa ringed seal	Citizens	Parliament	3.7.2019	76 200	Conservation of Finnish nature	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/4804

Petition name	Translation	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressees	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic	URL
Täydentävät hoidot kaikille- Kansalaisten yhdenvertainen valinnanvapaus saada täydentäviä hoitoja on turvattava	Complementary care for all- Equal freedom of choice for citizens to receive complementary care must be guaranteed	Citizens	Parliament	6.8.2019	28 416	Citizen campaigning	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/5011
Kansalaisaloite kansainvälisen GCM-sopimuksen hyväksynnän mitätöimiseksi Suomessa	Citizen initiative to reject GCM-contract in Finland	Politician	Parliament	4.12.2018	24 527	Conservation of Finnish nature	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/3592
KANSALAIALOITE VARHAISKASVATUKSEN SUHDELUKUJEN TARKEMMASTA MÄÄRITTELYSTÄ	Citizen initiative to specify ratio of caretakers and children in early childhood education	Citizens	Parliament	3.4.2019	15 109	Promoting free education	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/4132
Päivän Byrokraatin aloite Suomen työmarkkinoiden uudistamiseksi	Petition to reform Finnish labour market	Citizens	Parliament	2.1.2018	4 649	Worker rights	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/2785
Mikromuovien käytön kieltäminen kosmetiikassa lainsäädännöllä	Legally banning micro plastics in cosmetics	Citizens	Parliament	19.2.2018	58 367	Conservation of Finnish nature	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/2986
Vanhusvaltuutetun virka perustettava valvomaan ja parantamaan vanhusten oikeuksia	Senior representative to monitor senior rights	Citizens	Parliament	31.1.2019	13 097	Citizen campaigning	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/3831
Koti 2019	Home 2019	Citizens	Parliament	17.10.2018	4 624	Promoting inclusivity and cultural events	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/3377

The Covid-19 pandemic did not produce many culture-related trending petitions, although certainly it did cause hardship for cultural sector. Only covid-related petition among the most trending ones was a petition to block requirement for covid passport for work. During this time frame, many petitions for conservation of Finnish nature was initiated, for example, to ban clearcutting of forests or to regulate mining operations more strictly. The most trending petitions in the topic of citizen campaigning were relating to hunting: banning hunting of endangered species, starting wolf hunting to manage the wolf population and legalizing hunting of white-fronted goose. Petition towards establishing a night city, an area where cultural events could be organized with less restrictions, in Helsinki was initiated towards Helsinki city council.

Table FI - 3 - Top trending petitions related to culture initiated after 1.3.2020. Majority of petitions are directed towards the Parliament. For these petitions, the threshold of signatures for to be considered in the Parliament is 50000.

Petition name	Translation	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressees	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic	URL
Uhanalaisten lajien metsästäminen kiellettävä metsästyslaissa	Hunting of endangered species must be prohibited in the hunting law	Citizens	Parliament	20.8.2020	52 060	Citizen campaigning	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/7023
Ei koronapassia työpaikoille	No covid passports for jobs	Citizens	Parliament	7.11.2021	58 717	Mental- and social care campaigning	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/9240
Suden kannanhoidollisen metsästyksen aloittaminen ja susivahinkojen estäminen	Starting wolf hunting to manage wolf population and preventing wolf damage	Citizens	Parliament	31.8.2020	60 929	Citizen campaigning	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/7047
Elämäkatsomustiedon opiskelu sallittava kaikille	Studying studies in religion and ethic must be allowed for everyone	Citizens	Parliament	20.8.2021	30 023	Gender and sexual rights	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/8860
Me allekirjoittaneet vaadimme, että Ympäristöministeriö valmistelee tarvittavat lakimuutokset, jotta Kitkan-Koutajoen vesistö ja ympärillä olevat (mm. Riisitunturi) vaarajonot määritellään kokonaisuudessaan valtakunnallisesti arvokkaaksi maisemaksi.	We, demand that the Ministry of the Environment prepare the necessary amendments to the law so that the Kitkan-Koutajoki watershed and the surrounding forested hill lines (including Riisitunturi) are defined as a nationally valuable landscape.	Citizens	Parliament	29.12.2020	24 307	Conservation of Finnish nature	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/7818
Kaivostoiminnalle RAJAT	Limits for mining	Citizens	Parliament	31.5.2021	60 021	Conservation of Finnish nature	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/8561
Oikeus olla -kansalaisaloite oikeudenmukaisen translain puolesta	The right to be - a citizens' initiative for a fairer	Citizens	Parliament	6.4.2021	68 374	Gender and sexual rights	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/8320

Petition name	Translation	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressees	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic	URL
	transgender law						
Saariin kohdistuvia avohakkuita rajoitettava	The islands should be restricted from clear-cutting forests	Citizens	Parliament	15.9.2021	6 241	Conservation of Finnish nature	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/8938
Kansanäänestyksen järjestäminen EU:n elpymispaketista	Hold a referendum on the EU recovery package	Politicians	Parliament	22.9.2020	58 960	Promotion of political work	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/7224
Kaikki metsästysraudat kiellettävä lailla	All hunting irons are prohibited by law	Citizens	Parliament	8.7.2021	56 189	Citizen campaigning	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/8711
Lakialoite turpeen energiakäytön lopettamiseksi	Legislative initiative to end the use of energy from turf	Citizens	Parliament	20.8.2020	50 852	Conservation of Finnish nature	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/7020
Kissakriisi hallintaan - kissojen tunnistusmerkinnän ja leikkauttamisen puolesta	Cat Crisis Management - For Cat Identification And Surgery	Citizens	Parliament	9.3.2021	56 862	Conservation of Finnish nature	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/8176
Kouluväkivalta kirjattava rikoslakiin	School violence must be added in the criminal law	Citizens	Parliament	20.10.2020	56 345	Citizen campaigning	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/7485
Psykoterapian puolesta – Kansalaisaloite psykoterapiakoulutuksen muuttamisesta maksuttomaksi	For Psychotherapy - Citizens' Initiative to make psychotherapy training free of charge	Citizens	Parliament	15.9.2020	55 818	Promoting free education	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/7206
Poikien sukuelinten silpomisen kieltäminen	Prohibition of genital mutilation of boys	Citizens	Parliament	21.10.2020	26 051	Gender and sexual rights	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/7482
OmaTahto2020 – Päivitetään Suomen aborttilaki 2020-luvulle!	OmaTahto2020 - Updating the Finnish Abortion Act for the 2020s!	Citizens	Parliament	23.9.2020	53 654	Gender and sexual rights	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/7233
Valkoposkivanhan metsästyksen salliminen	Allowing white-fronted goose hunting	Citizens	Parliament	8.5.2020	52 520	Citizen campaigning	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/6563
Yökaupunginosa Helsinkiin	Night district to Helsinki	Politician	City council	July 2021		Promoting inclusivity and	https://www.facebook.com/...

Petition name	Translation	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressees	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic	URL
						cultural events	ook.com/505419049469417/photos/a.507674695910519/4608008229210458/?type=3
Eläinten tappamiskilpailut kiellettävä lainsäädännöllä	Killing competitions of animals has to be criminalized	Citizens	Parliament	1.3.2020	9 996	Conservation of Finnish nature	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/6143
Ehjänä syntynyt - loppu "eheytyshoidoille"	Born as whole – stop conversion therapy	Politicians	Parliament	19.7.2021	53 080	Health and social care	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/8747
Vanhoja puita ja pesimäpaikkoja lähimetsiin: luonto- ja maisema-arvoille painoa	Old trees and nest places to close forests: weight for nature- and landscape values	Citizens	Municipal government	1.5.2020	276	Conservation of Finnish nature	https://www.kuntalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/14476
Hävittäjähankintojen pysäyttäminen ja uudelleen arviointi	Stop buying fighter planes and re-evaluate the need	Citizens	Parliament	16.4.2020	7 408	Citizen campaigning	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/6437
5G-verkon käyttöönottoa on lykättävä, kunnes sen vaikutukset luontoon ja ihmisen terveyteen on selvitetty	5g-network grid has to be postponed until the impact for people and nature has been studied	Citizens	Parliament	27.5.2020	16 020	Conservation of Finnish nature	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/6572
Polttoaineveron alentaminen	Lower gas taxes	Citizens	Parliament	16.3.2021	106 315	Climate change and pets	https://www.kansalaisaloite.fi/fi/aloite/8200

5.7. Discussion and conclusions

The analysis for culture-related Finnish Facebook posts during the timeframe from 1.1.2018 to 31.12.2022 presented us with insights of topics and themes that citizens find important. Using a comprehensive list of 111 keyword relating to different aspects of culture, a wide-ranging collection of Facebook posts relating to culture were retrieved. A computational text analysis revealed us the main themes discussed in these posts. Themes such as free and inclusive education, preservation of Finnish nature, and gender and sexual rights were promoted through petitions.

The majority of the petitions relating to culture were targeted towards the Parliament. Many of the most trending petitions on Facebook were also successful in achieving the 50000 signatures, the threshold for an initiative to advance to consideration of the Parliament. The majority of these, and citizen initiatives

towards the Parliament in general, did not end up enforced.

One topic more closely related to a narrow definition of culture as arts was identified. With this topic, inclusive cultural events, mainly in Finnish capital Helsinki, were promoted. Posts stemming most probably from this topic were desiring more quays suitable for swimming, an area with lighter restrictions dedicated for cultural events, free and inclusive sport possibilities in suburbs and public saunas.

6. Findings for France

6.1. Facebook and petitions in France

According to a study conducted by Soprisim and Meta (Soprisim 2021), in 2021 Facebook audience was composed of 36 million people. Facebook personal accounts are equally distributed between the sexes in France, but they strongly over-represents the population aged 18 to 44 (see **Table - FR - 1**). Likewise, Paris metropolitan area accounts for 19.1% of active personal accounts, with the city of Paris alone accounting for 6% of these Facebook accounts.

According to the same study, these characteristics are related to an audience profile of engaged shoppers, science and culture enthusiasts committed to ecology issues, organizations & associations matters and public policy debate. In terms of art-related topics, French personal accounts are particularly concerned with the Design, Cultural activities, Photography and Dance.

Table FR - 1 Distribution of Facebook users in France and the French population by age group

Age	Facebook ¹ (%)	France ² (%)	Difference
13-17	1.2	7.4	-6.2
18-24	14	9.8	+4.2
25-34	25	13.4	+11.6
35-44	20.9	14.6	+6.3
45-54	16.5	15.2	+1.3
55-64	11.6	14.9	-3.3
≥65	10.8	24.7	-13.9
Total	100	100	

Source : ¹Soprosim 2021 ; ²INSEE 2022.

Scope: Persons aged 13 years old and over.

In France petitions can be addressed to the National Assembly and to the Senate and collect signatures through specific platforms. The right to petition is intended to open up parliamentary proceedings to civil society. Any adult, of French nationality or legally resident in France, may submit or sign a petition on these platforms. A petition addressed to the National Assembly that collected more than 100,000 signatures, takes a special visibility into the platform and is debated into a committee. On the proposal of a committee chairman or group chairman, petitions with more than 500,000 signatures may be debated in public session of the National Assembly: from 2017 to 2021, no petition has received enough signatures to be debated at the National Assembly. A petition addressed to the Senate that collects more than 100,000 signatures in less than six months is forwarded to the Conference of Presidents [*Conférence des Présidents*], which may decide to follow up on it (creation of a monitoring mission, inclusion on the agenda of a legislative text, debate in public session, etc.). These different procedures make it much easier to petition addressed to the Senate to be discussed.

Online petitions disseminated and collecting signatures on other platforms (e.g., Change, MesOpinions, Avaaz etc.) do not have a legal value and serve, above all, as a tool to give visibility to issues and, through this, as a means of pressure on the actors concerned.

6.2. Data description

By utilizing Crowdtangle data scraping tool, 170,928 Facebook public posts on community pages from 01/01/2018 to 31/12/2021 were retrieved by using the French word for “petition” [*pétition*]. Most of these posts do not directly address the issues most related to the INVENT project. To filter these petitions, we have used three procedures. First, we used the list of 156 terms related to the different cultural domains elected by the Data Scraping Taskforce. Each term was treated as a "word" and not as a sequence of characters (i.e., we selected only the word "opera" and not all words containing the sequence "opera", such as "operation" or "operator" etc.).

Secondly, we excluded all petitions using terms from a list of 119 words or expressions are out of scope, such as "animal rights", "pesticides" or "cop 21". Finally, we have removed terms that are more related to the structure of the petitions than to their content. For example, all time markers (names of months, days of the week, hours etc.), the main names of cities or words of commitment such as "sign", "participate". After filtering, our database contains **8,709 petitions** and **30,800 terms**, 51.05% posted after mars 2020.

6.3. Petitions about culture

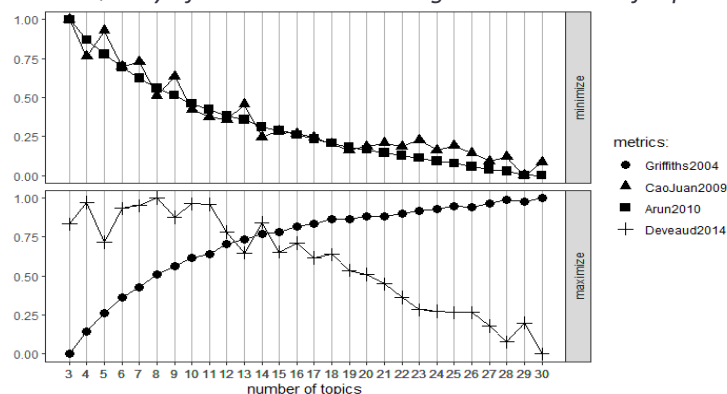
The top ten most frequent words in these culture-related petitions are art (3295 times), school (1173 times), culture (1046 times), sport (711 times), education (627 times), heritage (529 times), history (517 times), club (486), book (401 times) and artist (380 times). That is, they use a vocabulary linked to general cultural fields and very much influenced by the school system.

These culture-related petitions have higher commitment, compared to all petitions posted on public pages of Facebook. Indeed, they received an average of 30.8 comments (compared to 31.1 for all petitions), were liked by an average of 102 people (77.9 for all petitions) and were shared an average of 148.3 times (comp 89.7 for all petitions).

6.4. Topic modelling

Most of the indicators used to evaluate the quality of an LDA model show, in this case, only a "mechanical" increase in the quality of the classification according to the number of topics chosen (see). The only indicator that presents an inflection allowing to mark out our choice is the coherence (Deveaud et al., 2014). In indeed, according to this indicator, a modeling containing **eighth topics** is the one that best capture our filtered data.

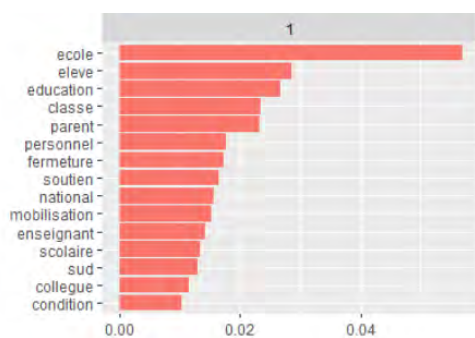
Figure FR - 1 - Quality of the models according to the number of topics they have



The topics that structure the whole of our corpus are: (1) Education and school; (2) Films, series, cultural institutions and events; (3) Places of culture: cinema, libraries, theater, festivals; (4) Local scale and heritage; (5) Sports; (6) Governance; (7) Struggle and daily life; (8) Sanitary or social crisis.

Topic 1 - Education and school

This topic focuses on issues relating to school and education in its broadest sense. Education, socialization of the young generation, thus integrates both the school (in the strict sense) and a series of values, relating for example to the respect for childhood, the defense of certain principles sometimes described by petitioners as "republican" (e.g., against the commercialization of the "sports hijab", ...) but also more global issues such as animal rights. The authors of the petitions have very diversified profiles. In the case of petitions relating to schools, there was a very strong internal structuring of demands, with teachers' associations, parents' associations, student groups and educational psychologists writing petitions to the Minister of Education.

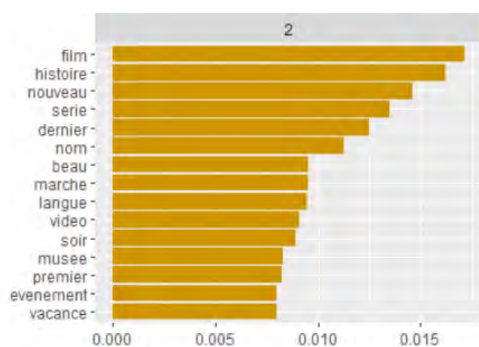


Topic 2 - Films, series, cultural institutions and events

This topic, very rich in content, have as a common thread the fact that the petitions have a strictly cultural object and are mainly addressed to the major players in the field (e.g., series producers such as Netflix, HBO; event organizations such as the Cannes Film Festival, the Tour de France etc.). There is thus a form of restricted circulation of these petitions in an internal sphere of culture, as if disconnected from public authorities.

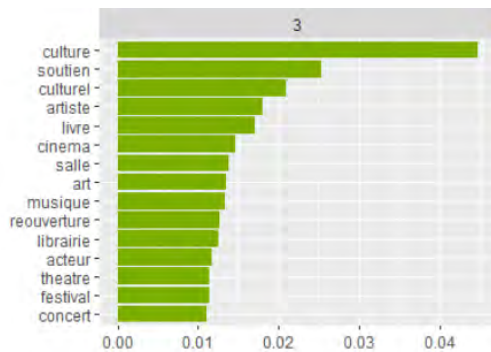
Nevertheless, the authors of these petitions are not necessarily actors of the world of culture: they can certainly be fans of a series who have been disappointed by a season or an episode; but they can also be actors from civil society who stand up against the choices made by producers in the name of broader values and principles (e.g. the fight against sexism, homophobia, antisemitism etc.).

We should mention, however, that petitions using the "tools" of cinema, video and art to raise awareness are included in this theme, such as the Thursday online concerts by Amnesty International calling for the protection of press rights; a film against incest.



Topic 3 - Places of culture: cinema, libraries, theater, festivals.

This topic concentrates petitions targeting public policies in the sphere of culture or specific cultural actions set up by private actors (companies, foundations, families etc.). Along with "Sanitary or social crisis", this is one of the topics whose content changed the most with the outbreak of the sanitary crisis and the implementation of the lockdown, which muted the cultural institutions then considered as "non-essential" to social life.



Thus, if the most influential petitions on Facebook before March 2020 concern private initiatives, relayed by citizens and fans belonging to some niches (the opening of a museum for a singer, the preservation of a specific handicraft shop); after the first lockdown, national issues predominate in trend. For example, the Union of Booksellers launched two petitions calling for the reopening of bookshops as soon as possible. Other petitions included a call to make motorway tolls free in order to boost the French tourist economy, or a request for the reopening of all art galleries.

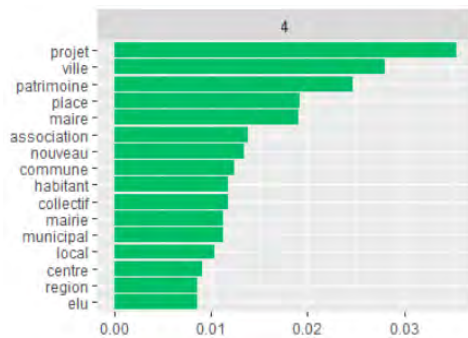
The social situation thus leads to an extension of the scope of the demands, which are now addressed to the national political level (the President of the Republic, as the main addressee) and a shift in the actors initiating the petitions from citizens to actors of the cultural economy.

Topic 4 - Local scale and heritage

The topic is characterized by the petitions on heritage. Whether it concerns the preservation, restoration or renovation of local heritage, these petitions question the local (or regional) public powers, to whom x% of the petitions are addressed.

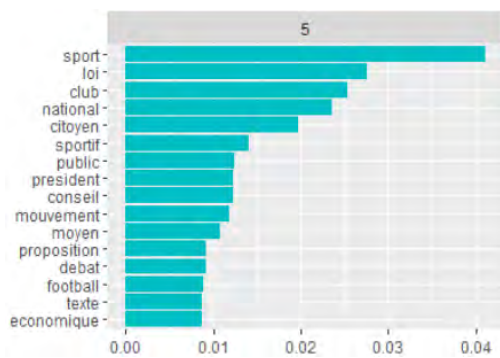
Topic 4 is influenced by the logic of a social network like Facebook. Indeed, due to the "local" level of the petitions most related to this theme, the visibility of each petition and the commitment it produces on Facebook is lower. This is not to say that they are less important, less effective or less capable of reaching all of the individuals most directly concerned. Quite simply, when a petition is strongly supported by the population of a small community, it is not very visible at the national level.

Those that have a high visibility on the network, appeal to the local implementation of a national (often cultural) heritage and, thus, mobilize a double commitment, namely, on the one hand the (numerically small) population in direct contact with the object of the petition and a wider population that feels concerned by it.



Topic 5 - Sports

The petitions in this topic focus, as the name suggests, on sport. For those noted in trend, they are above all addressed to the large sports goods retailers, the organizers of major sporting events (such as the Tour de France) or the teams in the case of football. Through these petitions, it is less the physical activity itself that is the subject than what surrounds it: some of the practices of the organizers (women recruited for their physique in order to stand next to the athletes on the podium), the sale of equipment perceived as not conforming to certain values (hunting equipment, equipment adapted for women wearing the veil). The plurality of issues is reflected in the plurality of petitioners, ranging from far-right parties to supporters' groups or citizens' initiatives

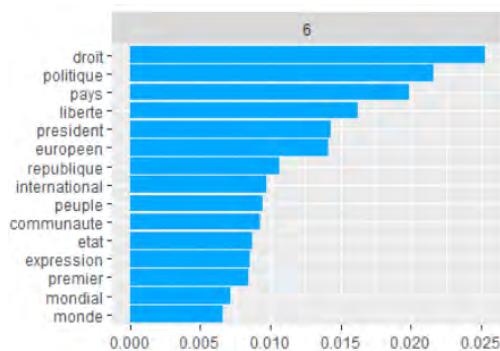


Topic 6 - Governance

This topic is distinguished by the greater technicality of the petitions. They mobilize different institutional scales both in their writing and among their addressees: ministries (of Justice, Gender Equality, Education), the French State, heads of foreign states (e.g., a petition is addressed to the Queen of Denmark in order to stop the hunting of dolphins in the country), international journalists and human rights defenders (e.g., for the release of a woman in a Chinese concentration camp).

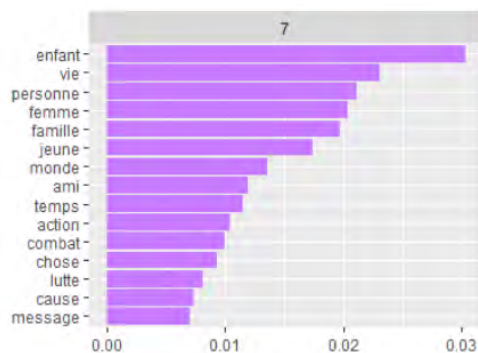
This technicality is thus found in the articulation of the different scales of influence and decision making, which can be understood by the difficulty of addressing a single global actor for international issues, but also in the mobilization of abstract principles linked to cultural values (e.g., freedom of expression, a challenge to the reason of State, human rights, property and tradition, the legitimate defense of a woman against her violent husband).

The authors of these petitions are often citizens, civil society organizations (such as parent associations) calling for action on specific cases that should, according to the authors, concern everyone because of their universal basis.



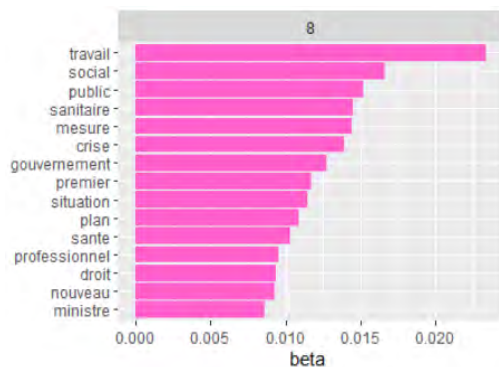
Topic 7 - Struggle and daily life.

This topic concentrates petitions on social problems that concern individuals more directly, despite the macro-social dimension of the issues. They are structured by the co-existence of a means of oppression and a victim or victims (of racism, sexism, homophobia etc.). The aim is to redress an injustice that affects the daily lives of victims, both human and animal. The aim is to redress an injustice that affects the daily life of the victims, whether human or animal, and to directly address a level that is often above what is perceived as oppressive in order to put an end to the oppression: the French State for cultural policies that can be legislated, ministers and the President for specific cases linked to the policies pursued, the producers of a series or the organizer of a festival.



Topic 8 - Sanitary or social crisis

This topic is characterized by two social crises that have taken place in France. First, the Yellow Jackets [*Gilets jaunes*] crisis, a citizen and popular movement born in November 2019. This movement was in opposition to the increase in the price of fuel due to the introduction by the government of an ecological tax. The protests quickly gained momentum and became a national movement that influenced the life of the country for almost a year, with the emergence of democratic demands.



Secondly, the health and social crisis of COVID-19. This theme seems to be the most closely linked to national current affairs. We can therefore understand the importance of these petitions in the most influential ones. They emerge both from actors affected by the crisis (e.g., tourism actors in France, cultural institutions) and from organizations, very often political parties or collectives located on the extreme right of the French political spectrum (denouncing the government's policy, a 'health dictatorship').

Finally, these petitions with national stakes are in most cases addressed to the President of the French Republic, Mr. Emmanuel Macron. Once again, it should be noted that for petitions from far-right parties, the scope of the petition is more blurred: they are often confused with an electoral propaganda article and the mobilization of voters, of communication with them.

6.5. Petition platforms and addressees

The data was ranked according to popularity, measured by the number of comments, likes and shares. From this ranking, we came up with the two tables below, summarizing the trending petitions. Unfortunately, this table is incomplete and imperfect due to the nature of the data (erasable digital traces), the choices inherent to the writing and diffusion of petitions, as well as the manipulation of the latter. Let us clarify these last two points.

First of all, we noticed that a certain number of petitions did not go through the most common or institutional channels of petitions diffusion (e.g., Change.org, the National Assembly and the Senate): only 15% of culture-related petitions are linked to an URL (compared to 11.2% for all petition11). The Facebook post itself thus sometimes becomes the equivalent of a petition. As traditional petitions, it can be addressed to the executive, legislative or judicial powers as well as to an organization, or even not clearly identify a recipient. What matters in this context is to make an issue visible, to be able to make it a “viral” that will allow pressure, a specific way to make one's "voice" heard when the organization does not provide for it (as for the programming of a festival), or insufficiently (as for the National Assembly). This pressure through online “virality” can be the equivalent to the pressure linked to the number of signatures and the names of the signatories of a petition. For classical petitions, “virality” on the networks can also be perceived as

another indicator of commitment, although significantly less valued because it is not included in the final presentation of the petition. However, these posts raise the question of an implicit recipient of the petition.

Thus, the Facebook post is intended for online active citizens; the written and signed petition is a priori addressed to organizations, to which the petition is submitted by legal or informal means. Nevertheless, the petition can also be a tool for electoral propaganda, as we see with the numerous petitions of extreme right-wing organizations. The petition is then often without any address, and the number of signatures is concealed. The implicit addressee is then often the potential voter, by calling him to commit himself outside the time of the vote and thus by mobilizing him.

A particular mistrust must guide us in the analysis of these petitions launched by political organizations. Indeed, it is common for them to use bots, artificially increasing the commitment of a post, however with real consequences on the relationship that individuals will have with the petition.

We have thus chosen to keep among the trending petitions only those for which we still had a trace through the Facebook post or through the petition available online (almost always on change.org). We have retained the date of publication of the post Facebook as a potential indicator of the moment of publication of the petition or a potential indicator of the moment when the petition has generated the most engagement.

Finally, we note that ⅔ of the petitions mentioned below are addressed to the President of the Republic, Emmanuel Macron, and to members of successive governments (most often the Minister of National Education and Culture, as a consequence of the retained domain of petitions). This importance can be interpreted in two ways. First, the predominant place of the State in France, inherited from its history, led it to be a privileged recipient of the claims. Nevertheless, this predominance of the State as an addressee must be read with caution. The study of the addressees based on the most popular petitions leads to an overestimation of the national stakes because the commitment (in terms of the number of interactions and signatures) is a priori more important. Nevertheless, we have also seen rather how very local issues, such as heritage, could lead to an important commitment. In short, the national and local levels remain important in their ability to generate commitment. However, the regions also have cultural prerogatives: they thus seem less clearly identified by the actors, deferring above all to the event organizers, producers of cultural content, town halls and the state executive.

We refer to the description of each topic seen before for more details on the recipients of the petitions.

6.6. Examination of trending petitions

Table FR - 2 - Twenty-Five Most Trending Petitions on Facebook 2018-2020

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition date (on Facebook)	Number of signatures	Topics	URL
Emmanuel Macron. Where is your heritage?	L'équipe Damocles (a far-right movement/newspaper)	President of the French Republic	03/12/2018	10355	Topic 8: Sanitary or social crisis	Link
Soon no more horses in our vineyards?	Remy Bossert (regional figure in the fight for the preservation of Alsatian culture)	Court of Appeal of Colmar	09/21/2019	177018	Topic 4: Local scale and heritage	Link

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition date (on Facebook)	Number of signatures	Topics	URL
For the opening of a Primark shop in Bordeaux	NA	Primark	Succeed: 05/18/2022	NA	Topic 3: Places of culture	Link
Join the movement to stop lion farming and canned hunting	Born Free	South Africa government	01/02/2020	NA	Topic 1: Education and school	Link
For the definitive abolition of bullfighting in France	Fondation 30 millions d'amis (French association of the animal rights movement)	President of the French Republic	07/01/2018	422909	Topic 7: Struggle and daily life	Link
Against the conviction of a farmer for the smell of his cows	NA	Court of Cassation of Limoges	11/22/2019	More than 120000	Topic 4: Local scale and heritage	Link
Against a sanction for an RATP school that slapped a pupil after he was disrespectful	RATP Union	RATP	09/17/2018	355343	Topic 1: Education and school	Link
No to the return of jihadists to France!	Front National (Far-right party)	NA: it looks more like a referendum for the far-right candidate Marine Le Pen.	02./03/2019	NA	Topic 8: Sanitary or social crisis	Link
Give Lucifer a season 6	Fan of Lucifer	Netflix	06/28/2019	119577	Topic 2: Films. Series. Cultural institutions and events	Link
For a rewrite of the last season of Game of Throne	Fan of GOT	Game of Throne producer	05/16/2019	1853847	Topic 2: Films. Series. Cultural institutions and events	Link
Territorial journalists are real journalists.	A group of journalists	Legislators	NA	648	Topic 4: Local scale and heritage	Link
For the right to a continuous and coherent school career for deaf pupils	National Association of Parents of Deaf Children	Minister of Education	11/05/2018	42770	Topic 6: Governance Topic 1: Education and school	Link
This Racist. Homophobic and Misogynistic Actor Will Be Honored at Cannes	NA	Cannes Festival	05/13/2019	29440	Topic 2: Films. Series. Cultural institutions and events	Link

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition date (on Facebook)	Number of signatures	Topics	URL
For the abolition of the privileges granted to former presidents	NA	French State	12/19/2018	248845	Topic 6: Governance	Link
S/ES: Baccalauréat de Français 2019. Subject too difficult. Ask to be more lenient!	NA	Minister of Education	06/19/2019	54127	Topic 1: Education and school	Link
Manifesto "against the new anti-Semitism"	Citizens' initiative after 300 historians published an opinion piece	President of the French Republic	04/25/2018	51380	Topic 2: Films. Series. Cultural institutions and events	Link
Boycott Johnny Hallyday's latest album. And demand that the proceeds from the sale of his latest album be used to create a Johnny museum	NA	Hallyday Family	10/19/2018	1009	Topic 2: Films. Series. Cultural institutions and events. Topic 3: Places of culture	Link
Free my mother from the concentration camps in China (Uighur)!	Gulhumar Haitiwaji	Journalist. Lawyer. Humanist	14/12/2018	458669	Topic 6: Governance	Link
For the deprogramming of Bertrand Cantat (successful singer. Author of a femicide) in a festival	NA	Mayor of Saint-Laurent-de-Cuves (Manche). R.O.C. en Baie. The association organising the event and the Papillons de nuit festival	03/07/2018	74834	Topic 2: Films. Series. Cultural institutions and events.	Link
For the creation of a new word. "vendredir". Meaning the action of coming together to lead a peaceful revolution	NA (Algerian context : revolution against Bouteflika)	Académie française (French Academy)	04/12/2019	2220	Topic 6: Governance Topic 1: Education and school	Link
I support Zemmour [extreme right-wing polemicist convicted of inciting racial hatred]: no to censorship. Yes to freedom of expression	L'équipe Damocles (a far-right movement/newspaper)	Call for mobilisation	09/02/2019	187123	Topic 6: Governance	Link

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition date (on Facebook)	Number of signatures	Topics	URL
For the abolition of the hunting department at Decathlon. A major sports retailer	NA	Decathlon	09/08/2018	110460	Topic 5: Sports	Link
Nice Carnival free to NIÇOIS and for ALL	NA	Mayor of Nice	02/21/2018	2210	Topic 2: Films. Series. Cultural institutions and events	Link
Sport liberates. The veil enslaves! Decathlon must withdraw its "running hijab!"	Debout la France (French far-right movement).	Decathlon	02/26/2019	NA	Topic 1: Education and school	Link
Tourdefrance: for the end of the podium hostesses	NA	Tour de France organisation	07/26/2019	7571	Topic 5: Sports Topic 7: Struggle and daily life Topic 2: Films. Series. Cultural institutions and events	Link

Table FR - 3 - Twenty-Five Most Trending Petitions on Facebook 2020-2022

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition date (on Facebook)	Number of signatures	Topic	URL
« Mr. President. let's choose culture by reopening bookstores! »	Le Syndicat de la librairie française (= The French Book Trade Unions)	President of the French Republic	10/30/2020	212 078	Topic 3: Supporting culture.	Link
Petition so that Iker Casilas. a football player who suffered a stroke. can play a symbolic minute to be crowned champion at the end of the season.	FC Porto supporters	FC Porto	07/12/2020	NA	Topic 5: Sports	Link
Petition so that a family of upholsterers for seven generations can keep their shop.	« Sauvons Les Patard » group (= « Saving the Patard Family »).	Owner of the rented building at 174 rue Marcadet. 75018 Paris	04/09/2020	699	Topic 6: Governance Topic 3 : Places of culture	Link
« Against the vaccine pass »	Les Patriotes (French far-right party).	President of the French Republic	02/26/2021	NA	Topic 8: Sanitary or social crisis	Link

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition date (on Facebook)	Number of signatures	Topic	URL
(for restaurants. cinema. etc.).						
Petition to raise awareness of the issue of consent and tackle the issue of incest: in favor of a new law.	« Face à l'inceste » association (= In front of Incest).	President of the French Republic Legislators. Secretary of State Adrien Taquet. responsible for children and families.	11/06/2020	53 718	Topic 2: Films. series. cultural institutions and events — this petition is accompanied by a video clip.	Link
« Demand an end to welfare payments for parents of delinquents! »	Rassemblement National (French far-right party).	NA: it looks more like a referendum for the far-right candidate Marine Le Pen.	10/29/2021	NA	Topic 5: Sports (nonsense).	Link
« Stop the despicable slaughter of dolphins in the ferroe islands! »	Michel Legros and all friends of nature and diversity	Her Majesty Margrethe II. Queen of Denmark	07/27/2020	249 427	Topic 6: Governance	Link
Petition for a 1 June 2020 opening date for campsites.	NA	President of the French Republic	18/04/2020	NA	Topic 7: Struggle and Daily life	NA
Boycott Orelsan [a French rapper]: For the abolition of the offensive connotation of the term "Mongol"	Routes Nomades - Association accredited by UNESCO	Minister of Culture Minister of Education	12/23/2021	15 604	Topic 2: Films. series. cultural institutions and events. Topic 7: Struggle and Daily life	Link
"Ethical Breach and Government Lies" - Petition against the "Health Dictatorship"	Francis Lalanne (French composer who became an important activist during the covid crisis).	Call to the national representation for the impeachment of the president of the republic.	01/30/2021	31 097	Topic 6: Governance Topic 8: Sanitary or social crisis.	Link
For a reopening of schools in the face of covid.	Marie-Estelle Dupont (psychologist).	Minister of Education	12/16/2021	NA	Topic 1: Education and school.	Link
"Click and collect is fine. but it's not our job » (this is an update of the first petition from the booksellers' unions)	Le Syndicat de la librairie française (= The French Book Trade Unions)	President of the French Republic	10/30/2020	212 078	Topic 3: Supporting culture.	Link

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition date (on Facebook)	Number of signatures	Topic	URL
"Freedom for Valerie Bacot [victim of incest by her stepfather; she was imprisoned for killing him]!"	Valerie Bacot's support committee	Minister of Justice Minister for Equality between Women and Men. Diversity and Equal Opportunities	01/25/2021	720 529	Topic 6 : Governance Topic 7 : Struggle and Daily life	Link
« For the preservation of family education rights »	A coalition of homeschooling collectives	The EESC (Economic, Social and Environmental Council) Mr President of the Republic. Mr Prime Minister. Mr Minister for Education. Ministers. Members of Parliament.	10/06/2021	161 045	Topic 7: Struggle and Daily life Topic 1: Education and school	Link
« Let's make tolls free to support tourism and help the French! »	Debout la France (French far-right movement).	President of the French Republic	05/25/2020	NA	Topic 3: Supporting culture. Topic 8: Sanitary or social crisis.	Link
Save the statue of the Archangel Saint-Michel in Sables-d'Olonne threatened with dismantling.	S.O.S Calvaires (Association for the Defence of Christian Heritage).	the Nantes administrative court	11/24/2021	NA	Topic 4: Local scale and heritage	Link
Petition to save a mysteriously missing rooster accused of crowing too loudly	The inhabitants of Saint-Pardoux-la-Rivière. a small village.	NA	09/12/2020	NA	Topic 4 : Local scale and heritage	Link
Support for teachers sanctioned for opposing the Baccalaureate reform	Support Committee for the 3 de Melle	Minister of Education	05/25/2020	11 130	Topic 1: Education and school.	Link
Petition against the municipal decision of the ecologists in Bordeaux to stop putting up Christmas trees.	Martin Petit (local personality)	Bordeaux Mayor	09/14/2020	16 949	Topic 3: Supporting culture.	Link

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition date (on Facebook)	Number of signatures	Topic	URL
Petition demanding the withdrawal of Split on Netflix. accused of stigmatising people with multiple personalities	NA	Netflix	18/04/2022	2 916	Topic 2: Films. series. cultural institutions and events. Topic 7: Struggle and daily life.	
Let's protect the treasures of humanity in Nagorno-Karabakh (Artsakh)!	Valérie Boyer. French politician.	President of the French Republic	11/17/2020	11 406	Topic 6: Governance	Link
Petition to save Elena Milashina. a Russian journalist threatened with death by the Chechen authorities for investigating the management of COVID19 in the country.	Amnesty International's musical interlude (series of concerts during confinement every Thursday to raise awareness for a cause)	NA	05/14/2020	NA	Topic 2: Films. series. cultural institutions and events	Link
No to the replacement of the statue of Napoleon in Rouen	L'Histoire à la Française	Rouen Mayor	09/19/2020	21 555	Topic 4: Local scale and heritage	Link
Free Rokia Traoré (convicted because her former husband accused her of depriving him of her child. despite a Malian court ruling that deprived the husband of custody of the children)	Fatma Karali	Belgian Government Belgian Justice	03/15/2020	30 078	Topic 7: Struggle and Daily life	Link
Lifting of the confinement of art centres. Frac and museums	Palais de Tokyo (a French contemporary art museum)	Minister of Culture	02/02/2021	9 838	Topic 3: Supporting culture. Topic 8: Sanitary or social crisis.	Link

6.7. Discussion and conclusions

The analysis of online petitions in France and, more particularly, those disseminated on Facebook, shows that the use of such a political tool is primarily aimed at making an issue visible to the general public rather than bringing it into parliamentary debate, which are, however, the institutional spaces that should deal with these claims. This is particularly visible in the near absence of official platforms in the petitions posted on this social network. But, above all, by the absence of any reference to an online petition platform in most of the posts promoting petitions. Indeed, while the sheer number of signatures required to trigger a

parliamentary debate and the need for signatories to be identified are real disincentives to individual engagement; a large proportion of culture-related petitions seek, above all, to draw the attention of the press to issues that are important to groups of citizens, which can be achieved through other engagement measures than signatures (such as likes, shares and comments etc.). Thus, many of these posts have the explicit aim of drawing the attention of the press (local and/or national) to an issue and, through this, redirecting public debate.

The petitions are mostly addressed to political leaders, including the president of the republic, his ministers, and some international organization such as UNESCO. However, regardless of its content, this can be read as a strategy to make the issue of a petition more general and thus likely to attract the interest of a much wider audience. Indeed, the most successful petitions (in terms of likes, shares, and comments) are those that have managed to translate local causes into global issues.

We do not observe a major change in the prominence of topics during the period analysed, except *Topic 1* in 2018 (whose prominence during the implementation of a reform of access to university explains the wide circulation of petitions related to this topic) and *Topic 8* (which is very much linked to the covid-19 crisis and its consequences).

7. Findings for the Netherlands

7.1. Facebook and petitions in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands there are 10,4 million of Facebook users (in 2021), of which 6,9 million use the platform daily. According to [NewCom Research and Consultancy](#), the age group that uses Facebook the most is 30-39 years old. Since 2018, the participation of users aged 20–29 has declined from 60% to 48% in 2021. Although the overall use of social media in the Netherlands has seen an upsurge during Covid-19, especially amongst the age groups of 15-19 and 20-39 years old, the overall number of Facebook users in the Netherlands has declined with 87.000 users, which is mostly due to young people switching to alternative social media channels like TikTok. On Facebook, a steady 52% percent of users are women and 48% are men.

In the Netherlands, everybody is entitled to start a petition and offer it to an addressee. There is no minimum number of signatures required for the petition to be taken into consideration. The use of paper petitions has declined over the past decades, and online petitioning has been on the rise. However, the landscape of e-petition platforms in the Netherlands is fragmented: people can choose from a number of petition websites, such as [petitie24.nl](#), [petities.com](#), [avaaz.org](#), [change.org](#) and many more smaller petition platforms that have a thematic or political character (see figure 1). However, the website that is used most frequently is [petities.nl](#). The main petition addressees on [petities.nl](#) are (local) governmental bodies (about 50%).

Figure NL - 1 - Diversity of petition platforms in the Netherlands

National / general:
petities.nl
petitie24.nl
petities.com
actie.degoedezaak.org
International / general:
change.org
avaaz.org (ook NL-site)
thepetitionsite.com
Theme-specific:
dierenrecht.nl
amnesty.nl/kom-in-actie
Political/Ideological
petities.fvd.nl
groenlinks.nl/acties
cultuuronderuur.nl
Petition-specific:
laathetdoorgaan.nl
liefdevoormuziek.nu

7.2. Data description

For the data scraping phase, the NL team scraped all posts featuring the word “petition” (in the Dutch language only) that were posted in the Netherlands in the timeframe that was agreed upon by the Data-scraping Taskforce (beginning of 2018 until the end of 2021). This search yielded 27.043 Facebook posts.

In order to omit the posts that are not related to culture, the NL team used the same keyword list that was based on previous INVENT research on themes and topics related to culture, resulting in a long list of terms related to culture agreed upon by the taskforce members. However, the NL team added different variations of certain keywords in order to ensure that these would not be omitted during the filtering. Such words include, for instance, variations of the word “cultuur” (“cultureel”). We also added terms that, based on previous analyses, are known to be specific to Dutch cultural issues and topics (such as “zwarte piet”, “vuurwerk”, “schaatsen”). The initial filtering yielded more than 11.000 posts, many of which were not related to culture. Part of this was caused by specific topics, primarily related to animal cruelty and environmental issues. Thus, a second round of filtering was conducted in which all animal- and environment related keywords (for instance, “tiger”, “dog”, “animal”, “climate”, “plastic”) were omitted from the data. Another issue we encountered, was that certain key words were part of other words. For example, filtering with the word “eten” (food) also includes words like “moeten”, “genieten”, “weten”, “vergeten”, “zeurpieten”. Hence, we ensured that these words were excluded from the filtered Crowdtangle data by specifying word boundaries through additional code in R.

A final filtering was conducted during the topic modelling analysis in R. When obtaining the topics that emerged from the data, some topics were causing “noise”. Such noise consisted of words that were not helpful in the analysis, such as “day”, “year”, “petition”, “municipality”, “sign” or “signature”. Therefore, such keywords were omitted from the topic modelling process in order to obtain cleaner findings.

7.3. Petitions about culture

After the exercise of filtering for only culture-related petitions, we were left with 6.542 Facebook posts. Thus, 24% of the petitions posted on Facebook from 2018 until 2022 in The Netherlands were related to culture.

Table 1 shows the top 25 most frequent culture-related keywords (based on the keywords the task force team compiled). Such keywords reflect a “narrow” sense of culture, with words such as “music”, “festival”, “museum” or “statue”, as well as culture in a broader sense, with words such as “food”, “sport”, or “history”. The highest keyword frequencies do not only show the topical content of posts, but also the main purposes of a petition, for example “preservation”.

Table NL - 1 - Top 25 most frequent culture-related keywords (based on keywords list)

Keyword	Frequency
Preservation	861
Media	408
Corona	398
Music	286
Program	210
Sport	197
Food	192
TV	192
Parc	180
Covid	165
Market	164
Radio	159
Statue	150
Culture	146
Festivals	146
Racism	145
Museum	129
Artist	122
Price	116
LGBTI	115
Fans	114
History	114
Art	112
Broadcaster/ network	111
Party	110
Podium	107

Next, we examined the data in regard to likes, comments and shares for all data and for culture-related petitions posted on Facebook (see Table 2). Culture-related posts received a mean of 38 comments, 61 likes, and 30 shares, which is somewhat higher than the overall engagement with posts on Facebooks, that received one average 36 comments, 54 likes, and 28 shares.

Table NL - 2 - Facebook comments, likes and shares of all petitions and culture-related petitions

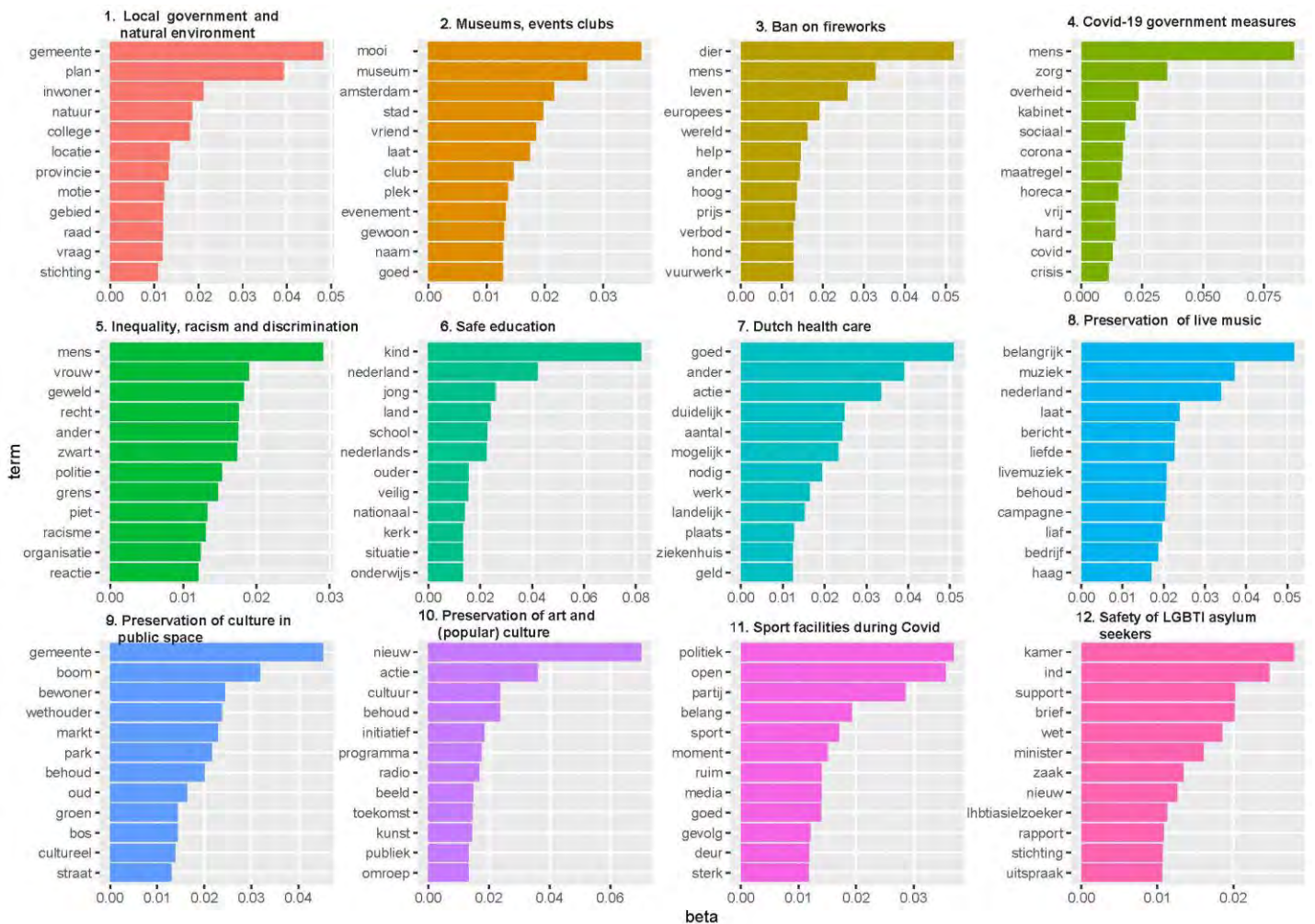
	All data	Filtered Data
Mean comments	36	38
Mean likes	54	61
Mean shares	28	30
SD comments	182	195
SD likes	273	261
SD shares	198	148

7.4. Topic modelling

In order to conduct topic modelling analysis on our filtered data we first had to decide on the optimal number of topics (k). To this end, we calculated the perplexity and coherence via an LDA model. Based on the model, we chose to proceed with 12 topics (k=12). Then, we conducted our topic modelling analysis, which yielded the following 12 topics:

Topic (1) local government and natural environment; (2) museums, events, clubs; (3) ban on fireworks; (4) Covid-19 government measures; (5) inequality, racism and discrimination; (6) safe education; (7) Dutch health care; (8) preservation of live music; (9) preservation of culture in public space; (10) preservation of art and (popular) culture; (11) sport facilities during Covid-19; (12) safety of LGBTI asylum seekers.

Figure NL - 2 - Topic Modelling results



Looking closer at these 12 topics, we see that in **topic 1: local government and natural environment**, local planning regarding nature is particularly prevalent. Moreover, the way local regional government bodies are involved in such plans regarding the outlook of local (natural) surroundings, are particularly defining for this theme.

Topic 2, highlighting **museums, events, and clubs**, concerns different cities and municipalities in the Netherlands, but the city of Amsterdam is particularly prominent as a place where such cultural venues are considered of vital importance.

Topic 3 is on the **possible ban on fireworks**. The items that define this topic can be both for and against this ban. The possibility of a Europe-wide ban is defining for this topic, as is the welfare of animals, dogs in particular, who are often afraid of fireworks.

Topic 4 regards the **Covid-19 measures** that have been taken by the Dutch government. What is of particular weight in this topic are the effects on public venues such as bars, restaurants and hotels, and also the pressure on the Dutch health care system.

Topic 5 is about social justice and different forms of **inequality** – such as gender inequality - **racism and discrimination**. The subtopic of police violence – presumably against cultural or other minorities - has a special place here.

Topic 6 deals with the **safety of education**, and in particular primary education, for young children in The Netherlands. As the church is explicitly part of this topic, the most prevalent issue at stake is probably related to the safety to be yourself and to express one’s sexual orientation and identity. This topic is largely defined by a national debate on religious schools that openly condemn homosexuality in their curricula.

Topic 7 regards calls and actions to attain increased funding for **Dutch health care system** that have been organized on the national level, especially during the Covid-19 outbreak, when the health care system came under immense pressure while at the same time awareness grew that this vital sector had been undervalued for a long time.

Topic 8 is about the **preservation of live music**, most likely very much defined by Covid-19 measures that resulted in temporary closure of many live music events.

Topic 9 regards the **preservation of culture in public space**. This might be about the preservation of cityscapes, markets, buildings, parks, or monumental trees, but also about cultural traditions, representations and tributes, such as public holidays, statues, and street names. This topic is defined both by calls for and against changing/preserving culture in public spaces. Municipalities play a particular role in the decision-making regarding this topic.

Topic 10 concerns the preservation of art and (popular) culture. This mostly regards national initiatives and calls for preservation or revival of culture, often initiated by public broadcast networks, radio stations, and often with respect to television and other forms of popular culture.

The opening up of **sport facilities during Covid-19** is central to **topic 11**. The role of media, but also that of politics in the decisions made on this issue get, special attention in this topic.

Finally, **topic 12** concerns the protection and **safety of LGBTI refugees**. The role the government and the Dutch immigration and naturalization service play in deciding about the status of these refugees, play an important role in this topic.

7.5. Petition platforms

As part of our analysis, we also explored the most used platforms through which people post petitions online (see table 3). These are the petition websites referred to in the Facebook posts regarding cultural petitions. In the Netherlands, many different websites play a role in hosting petitions related to culture.

Table NL - 3 - Most Common Petition Websites

Petition Address	N posts
Petities.nl	768
Degoedezaak.org	77
Petities24.com/nl	71
Avaaz.org	65
Petities.com	57
Change.org	41

7.6. Examination of trending petitions

Next, in order to delve deeper into our data, we explored the 25 most trending petitions on Facebook in two time periods: the two years before the pandemic (2018-2020) and the two years of the pandemic (2020-2022). In the following we section we include two tables which will summarize the titles of the petitions, their initiator/s, their addressees, the number of signatures they received and the topic we chose to associate them with, in line with our topic modelling analysis. We accompany the tables with impressions and reflections in regard to these petitions.

Table NL - 4 - Twenty-Five Most Trending Petitions on Facebook 2018-2020

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Bring back Loeki	Jan-Willem Roodbeen / media figure (radio DJ)	Independent governing body (STER)	25/4/2019 (end)	21,820 link	Topic 10: art and (popular) culture
Don't let illegal fireworks ruin our tradition!	Petition for fireworks	No addressee	Ongoing	165,408 link	Topic 3: ban on fireworks
Free during Carnaval	Bavaria Beer / Sjefke Vaeren	The Hague/ house of representatives	19/1/2015 to 7/2/2019	172,218 link	Topic 2: museums, events, clubs Topic 9: culture in public space Topic 10: art and (popular) culture
Ban on selling plastic confetti	Rene Rovekamp, voluntary street garbage collector/ private individual	House of representatives	6-11-22 (end)	6,266 link	Topic 1: Local government and natural) environment
EU: prohibit the use of wild animals in the circus	Eurogroup for Animals	European parliament	13-10-2021 (end)	988,655 link	Animal welfare in cultural events Slightly related to Topic 2: museums, events, clubs
Get Harry Potter on the Dutch Netflix	RTL Boulevard	Netflix	25/10/2018 (start)	11,204 link	Topic 10: art and (popular) culture
Get Messi a retrospective ban for clearly punching Fabinho in the head	Unknown	UEFA and Champions League	3/5/2019	16,157 link	Violence in sport- non-related to topic modelling
Formule 1 to Zandvoort	Jaap Koper / Private Individual	Province of North-Holland	2/2/2020	4,964 link	Topic 1: Local governments and natural environment Topic 2: museums, events, clubs Top 9: culture in public space
Remake Game of Thrones Season 8 with competent writers	Private individual	HBO	9/5/2019	1,853,656 link	Topic 10: art and (popular) culture

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Petition: prohibit slaughter without anaesthetic!	Animals today	House of representatives		37,843 link	Religious tradition and animal welfare – unrelated to topic modelling
“Vunzige Deuntjes Festival” must continue in the Amsterdam Forest	“Team Vunzige Deuntjes”	Municipality of Amstelveen	19/4/19 to 14/5/19	3,941 link	Topic 2: museums, events, clubs Topic 8: preservation of live music Topic 9: culture in public space
Support for teacher Keeman	Anita /private individual	Unknown	10/2/19 to 25/1/19	10,213 link	Topic 6: safe education
#EIGELAND (owncountry) – for a children’s pardon that works	Tim Hofman / BNNVara (public broadcaster)	House of representatives	29-1-19 (end)	254.116 link	Topic 5: inequality, racism and discrimination Topic 12: (LGBTI)-refugee safety
Rutte, withdraw the Netherlands from Marrakesh!	Cultuur onder Vuur (culture under attack)	Prime minister Rutte	27-11-18 (start)	50,000 plus link	Topic 9: culture in public space Topic 12: (LGBTI)-refugee safety
Toy museum Deventer	Garrelt Verhoeven, director museum	Municipality of Deventer		4,881 link	Topic 2: museums, events, clubs Topic 10: art and (popular) culture
“Te land, ter zee” back on TV	Johan Flemings / public media figure	Unknown	29/5/19 (start)	821 link	Topic 10: preservation of art and (popular) culture
Stop the trophy hunt now!	Animal rights	Federal minister of environment Khattabi	8/3/22 (end)	37,000 link	Animal welfare in hunting competitions (sports) – unrelated to topic modelling
Ronnie Flex deserves a statue	DWARS Groenlinks (political party)	Municipality of Capelle aan den IJssel	1/5/18 (end)	1,398 link	Topic 9: culture in public space Topic 10: art and (popular) culture
Ban Fireworks	Firework manifest	House of representatives	27-01-22 (end)	467,761 link	Topic 3: ban on fireworks
Hands off of homeopathy	Claire Hocks / private individual	Formateur (of national Dutch Government)	31/12/20 (end)	104,956 link	Citizen’s freedom to decide themselves on use of medication; related to topic 7: Dutch Healthcare system
Free choice for Sunday opening of stores in the municipality of Katwijk	VVD Katwijk (local political faction)	Municipality of Katwijk	20/12/20 18 (end)	526 link	Topic 9: culture in public space
Without Black Pete no Saint Nicholas in Deventer	Henny Poorterman/ private individual	Municipality of Deventer	17/10/19 to 4/11/19	1,612 link	Topic 5: inequality, racism and discrimination Topic 9: culture in public space
Zwarte Piet: End The Blackface minstrel show in the Netherlands!	Rianna Raymond-Willems/ private individual	Dutch government	09/19 (start)	318,115 link	Topic 5: inequality, racism and discrimination

When examining the petitions that were trending on Facebook between 2018 and 2020, we can see that 8 of them (32%) were addressed to national government bodies, such as the Dutch house of representatives, ministries and the prime minister or heads of city councils. 6 petitions (24%) were addressed to local and regional governments, such as cities and municipalities and provinces. One petition on the use of wild animals in the circus regarded the European parliament, and one other petition regarded a national government agent abroad, namely, the Federal minister of environment Khattabi. Other petitions (3), and mostly the ones on popular culture were directed to commercial bodies such as HBO and Netflix. One petition was addressed to sport federations. As to those initiating the petitions, 6 petitions were applied by private individuals, and 4 petitions were initiated by public (media) figures, such as TV or radio hosts or a museum director. 2 petitions were initiated by commercial organizations and 8 by ideological and political campaign groups.

As petitions in the Netherlands do not have a required minimum number of signatures to be offered to addressees, there is often no pre-defined signature aim. However, there are several petitions in the trending list of 2018-2020 that have clearly reached their goals, such as “Bring Loeki Back”, “Formula 1 to Zandvoort” and “Toy Museum Deventer”. The former being about an animated figure that used to be part of commercial blocks on public television from 1972, for about 32 years until the mid-nineties. The petition to bring Loeki back on television during commercial breaks was rejected at first, but as signatures continued, the request to bring Loeki back was granted by STER, the Dutch foundation on TV advertisements. The second petition was started to bring the Formula 1 race event to Zandvoort, a town near by the beach and dunes in the Netherlands. This petition was initiated *against* a campaign started by environmental activists to prohibit this event from taking place in a natural area that shelters many kinds of birds and other wildlife. This petition was probably not the main reason for the event to eventually take place (as large commercial and economic interests played a much larger role in this process). However, the petition did advocate firmly against environmental initiatives to block the event from being organized. The third petition that was granted was started to prevent closure of the Toy Museum in Deventer. The director of the museum himself started the petition and offered it to the city of Deventer. The initiative proved successful, and the museum is open until today.

This is not to say that other petitions had no effect. For part of the trending petitions, it remains unclear whether they were accepted and acted upon. However, for many of them it is clear they did bring about some form of change, by raising awareness or starting a conversation with stakeholder organizations. In general, we observe that the trending petitions in the period of 2018-2020 most often touch upon the topics “(preservation of culture in public space” (9) and “preservation of art and (popular) culture” (no. 10). Another topic that is important is topic 5 on “inequality, racism and discrimination”, regarding the ongoing debate about Black Pete being a racial stereotype that should (or should not) be removed from the National celebration of Saint Nickolas.

Table NL - 5 - Twenty-Five Most Trending Petitions on Facebook 2020-2022

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Remove Amber Heard from Aquaman 2	Jeanne Larsson / private individual	Warner Bros	Unknown	4,567,302 link	Topic 10: art and (popular) culture
We want Johnny Depp back as Captain Jack Sparrow	Rizza Siddiqui / private individual	Walt Disney Company	Unknown	872,046 link	Topic 10: art and (popular) culture
With 538 (radio) the health care system is scorned	Rogier Crolla / private individual (physician in Amphia hospital)	Municipality of Breda	14/07/21 (end)	390,660 link	Topic 2: museums, events, clubs Topic 4: Covid-19 government measures Topic 7: Dutch healthcare
Sports and exercise are essential services	Ronald Wouters (director of NL Actief) * Maurice Ambaum (owner of Ambaum Brandmakers)	House of representatives	31/2/22 (end)	377,532 link	Topic 4: Covid-19 government measures Topic 11: sport facilities during Covid-19
No to the speed law	Meldpunt Nederland	House of representatives	23/6/20	369,709 link	Topic 4: Covid-19 government measures
Stop corona discrimination	Fractie Belang van Nederland	The Dutch state	Unknown	267, 866 link	Topic 4: Covid-19 government measures Topic 5: inequality, racism and discrimination
For an open society without mandatory testing and vaccination	Bas Fillipini - Partij Vrij en Sociaal Nederland	House of representatives	11/8/21	166,697 link	Topic 4: Covid-19 government measures
Stop the Lockdown, free the Netherlands	Van Haga / political figure	Unknown	Unknown	150,000 Link n/a	Topic 4: Covid-19 government measures
Penalize insulting the prophet	Ismail Abou Soumayyah / private individual	"Those who can exercise power in this matter"	Unknown	124,399 link	Religious representations, slightly related to Topic 5: inequality, racism and discrimination
Stop tv-broadcast of van NTR-program 'Gewoon bloot' (just naked)	Daniel van Deutekom/ private individual	NPO (public broadcaster)	5/3/21	105,691 link	Topic 10: art and (popular) culture
More support and quicker reopening of hotels, bars and restaurants	Koninklijke (Royal) Horeca Nederland	House of representatives	27/2/21	88,082 link	Topic 2: museums, events, clubs Topic 4: Covid-19 government measures
For "Andere Tijden" (other times), stop the budget cuts	Veerle van Wijk/ private individual	NPO (public broadcaster)	Unknown	86,482 link	Topic 10: art and (popular) culture
Overturn the decision of the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. Lewis should be the winner	Pater Gordon Bennett / private individual	Unknown	Unknown	71,575 link	Sport - Unrelated to topic modelling

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Racism should be mandatory teaching material in schools	Radio station FunX and Sohna, Veronika & Lakiescha / private individuals	House of representatives	Unknown	62,014 link	Topic 5: inequality, racism and discrimination Topic 6: safe education
Make 1 July (remembrance of slavery) a national holiday	Radio station FunX + Stichting Nederland Wordt Beter + The Black Archives	House of representatives	7/7/21	60.960 link	Topic 5: inequality, racism and discrimination Topic 10: culture in public space
Love for music	Uima.org - initiatief NL muziekindustrie	Ministry of Education, Culture and Science	5/6/20	60,000 link	Topic 8: preservation of live music Topic 10: art and (popular) culture
Stop anonymous hate on internet and social media	Gordon / singer and TV host	Ministry of justice	8/3/21	41,428 link	Topic 5: inequality, racism and discrimination
The retail must open! It is safe	Paul te Grotenhuis / InRetail	Dutch government	01/06/21	27,909 link	Topic 2: museums, events, clubs Topic 4: Covid-19 government measures
Save the saloon boats of Amsterdam	United Saloon Boat Companies	Municipality of Amsterdam	27/10/21	22,393 link	Topic 9: culture in public space
The elfstedentocht (ice skating event) must go on	Unknown	Dutch government	Unknown	12,858 link	Topic 2: museums, events, clubs Topic 10: art and (popular) culture
The golden carriage belongs in a museum of slavery	Politieke Jongeren / Nuga Shestra	House of representatives	8/6/21	9.246 link	Topic 5: inequality, racism and discrimination Topic 10: art and (popular) culture
Remove stereotypical racist "attraction" called Monsieur Cannibale	Sammy S. / Private individual	Efteling (amusement parc)	Unknown / closed	2.741 link	Topic 5: inequality, racism and discrimination Topic 10: art and (popular) culture
Democratically chosen editor in chief for NOS (TV news)	Algemeen Burger Collectief (ABC) / Ferdinand van der Neut	House of representatives	1/1/21	2.721 link	Topic 5: inequality, racism and discrimination
The Vondelpark Open air theatre must stay open!	Vondelpark Open air theatre	Municipality of Amsterdam	09/20	2,000 link	Topic 2: museums, events, clubs Topic 8: preservation of live music Topic 9: culture in public space Topic 10: art and (popular) culture
Statue for Peter R. de Vries (assassinated crime journalist)	Chinouk Hensen/ private individual	Municipality of Amsterdam	Unknown	1,509 link	Topic 9: culture in public space
Talpa show your colour in racism debate	Diverse Muslim organizations	Talpa Media Group	Still open	652 link	Topic 5: inequality, racism and discrimination

When examining the petitions that were trending on Facebook between 2020 and 2022, we can see that 11 (44 %) were addressed to national government bodies, such as the Dutch house of representatives, ministries and ‘the Dutch state’. Only 4 petitions (16%) were addressed to local and regional government, mostly the municipality of Amsterdam (3). Compared to the period before Covid-19, the national government is addressed more frequently during Covid-19, while local governments seem to receive less trending petitions than before.

Other petitions (6), mostly those on popular culture, were again directed to commercial bodies such as Disney, Talpa Media, Warnes Bros and the NPO - the Dutch public broadcasting network. The Dutch amusement park called “The Efteling” is also one of these addressees. As to the initiators of petitions in this period, 7 petitions were applied by private individuals, while 8 were sent through ideological organizations and political campaign groups, such as the foundation “The Netherlands are getting better” and “diverse Muslim organizations”. We also see that institutions and companies, such as the “Vondelpark Open air Theatre” or the “United Saloon Boat Companies”, vouch for their own existence by filing petitions.

As said before, petitions in the Netherlands do not have a required minimum of signatures to be offered, meaning that it is impossible to tell from the number of signatures whether a petition was successful (or even offered) or not. However, there are several petitions in the trending list of 2020-2022 that have definitely reached their goals.

First, the petition “With 538 (radio) the health care system is scorned” was geared against an event that was initiated as an experiment (a so-called “fieldlab”) to see whether and how society could open up safely during Covid-19. However, viewing the experimental nature and the unpredictability of the outcome, the event led to a heated debate even before it took place. In this debate the advocates – mostly young people - of exploring options to open up society stood against health care organizations and professionals, who in turn saw experimenting with large live events during Covid-19 as a major risk to overburden the hospitals to an even greater extent than was already the case at the time. Eventually, the city of Breda that was hosting the event, called it off, considering the public worry and distress about the spread of Covid-19 and the impact on local and national hospitals.

Second, the petition “The Vondelpark Open air theatre must stay open!”, initiated by the theatre itself, has proven to be successful. The municipality of Amsterdam responded positively to the petition that was signed 2,000 times, and allowed for the theatre to remain open, although under conditions adjusted to the new Covid-19 risks and requirements.

Third, the petition geared at the closing of amusement parc attraction “Monsieur Cannibale” was successful: after 33 years, The Efteling decided to remove this attraction from the parc, as many public critics and petitioners (2,741) deemed the attraction, which was built in 1965, racist in the light of how we perceive issues of racial equality, difference and stereotyping today.

Again, also in this period, we see that petitions with no clear outcome have nonetheless had some effect. For example, the petition “Racism should be mandatory teaching material in schools” initiated by 3 high school girls in cooperation with a popular national radio station, did not (yet) lead to an adapted curriculum, but did result in conversations with the Council of Secondary Education (VO raad).

Generally, the petitions in the period of 2020-2022 paint a very different picture than the prior period of analysis, which is to a great extent coloured by Covid-19 and protest against measures and restrictions. Not only do we observe that petitions have raised awareness on social and cultural issues such as inequality, racism and discrimination (topic 5) to an even larger extent than before Covid-19, we also see that many petitions are an expression of frustration and turmoil, as many people in the Netherlands were unsatisfied or totally against Covid-19 measures taken by the government. All in all, the analysis of trending petitions during Covid-19 paint somewhat of a grim picture on cultural topics, with social and cultural inequalities

becoming more visible, and the calls for freedom and cultural participation becoming increasingly urgent.

7.7. Discussion and conclusions

The analysis for culture-related Facebook posts in The Netherlands, 2 years prior to Covid-19 and 2 years into the pandemic, presented us with insights of topics and themes that citizens find important. Using a comprehensive list of keywords relating to culture, a wide-ranging collection of Facebook posts about cultural themes and topics were retrieved. A computational text analysis revealed us the main themes discussed in these posts. Themes such as inequality, racism and discrimination; the preservation of live music and preservation of culture in public spaces; art and (popular) culture; public cultural venues and events (such as museums and clubs) and sports were some of the themes that were promoted through petitions.

The majority of the petitions relating to culture were addressed to local, regional and mostly national government bodies. In the Netherlands, there exists no threshold for petitions to be granted or even discussed by governments. However, the dataset represents several petitions that were not only trending on Facebook, but also successful in achieving their goals in concrete, 'offline' reality. Many petitions that did not (yet) achieve their main target, did however spark a debate or were able to raise awareness in society on cultural issues advocated for.

8. Findings for Serbia

8.1 Facebook and petitions in Serbia

According to Facebook's marketing API, in December 2021 (end of the time frame this report deals with), the social media platform had 4.51 million users in Serbia⁵ which accounted for around 65.6% of its entire population (based on the population estimate made by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia⁶) making it by far the most used social media platform in the country. Largest age group were users between 25 and 34 years of age (around 14%) while women (50.4%) constituted 0.8% more users than men (49.6%).

Although the law mandates that the Serbian Parliament must take an issue into consideration if a petition about it was signed by at least 30,000 citizens, most of the online petitions in the sample of this study addressed primarily the Government, with the Parliament and Municipal Governments being the second and third most popular petition addressees. Most popular petition websites in the country during the observed period were <https://www.peticije.online/> and <https://peticije.kreni-promeni.org/> which together hosted around 50% of the top 50 best performing petitions ranked by their success on Facebook.

8.2 Data description

Data was scraped from Facebook using the CrowdTangle platform. The scraped posts contained any form of the keyword "petition" ("peticija") in the Serbian language, were written in either Latin or Cyrillic script and were posted between the 1st of January 2018 and 31st of December 2021. After filtering for unique posts and transcribing them all into Latin script, the sample contained the total of 6,979 Facebook posts with mean number of likes at 155.59, mean number of shares at 25.45 and mean number of comments at 20.97.

In order to filter out the posts about petitions not related to culture, the team attempted to use the keyword list agreed upon by the rest of the taskforce members, but such approach yielded no significant results leaving an unchanged mix of culture and non-culture related posts while significantly reducing the dataset size. Therefore, it was decided to analyse all of the posts and determine the share of the petitions related to culture using an alternative approach of manually inspecting the most trending petitions further described below.

Prior to topic modelling, in order to reduce the noise and keep only words that carry distinctive meaning, the post messages were lemmatized (their words were transformed into their basic form) and all parts of speech apart from nouns, proper nouns and adjectives were removed. Additionally, overly used words in this context like "petition", "signature", "supporter" and similar were also removed in order to obtain more distinctive topic results.

For in-depth analysis of particular petitions, the dataset was split to posts dating from before (2018-2020) and during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021). From each of the resulting datasets, 25 most trending petitions were extracted and further analysed. Results were then compared and can be seen in the section 1.6.

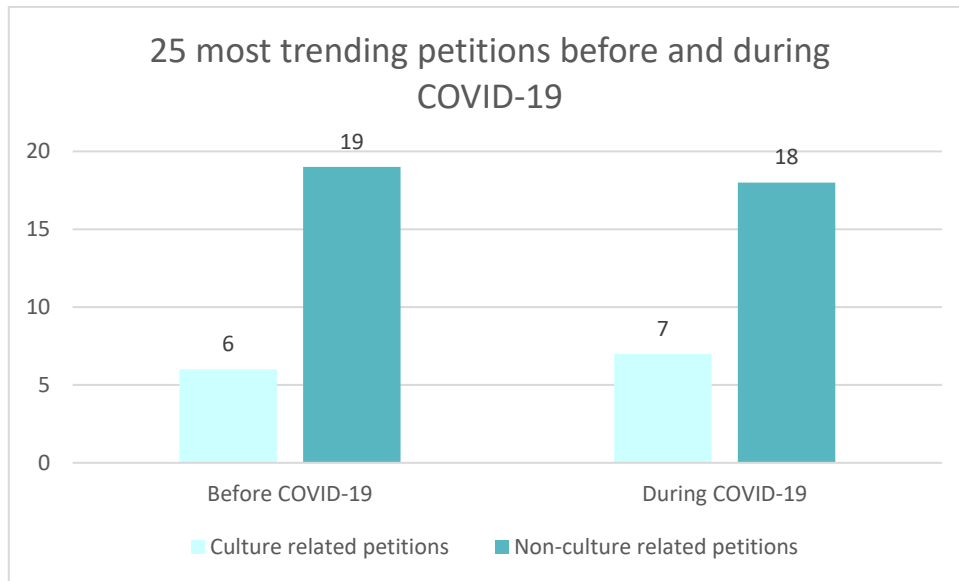
⁵ <https://napoleoncat.com/stats/facebook-users-in-serbia/2022/05/>

⁶ <https://www.stat.gov.rs/en-US/oblasti/stanovnistvo/procene-stanovnistva>

8.3 Petitions about culture

Manual inspection of the 25 most trending petitions from both of the aforementioned periods showed that 6/25 (24%) were related to culture before the COVID-19 pandemic, while this number rose to 7/25 (28%) during the pandemic (Graph 1).

Figure RS - 1 - Share of most trending petitions related to culture before and during the COVID-19 pandemic



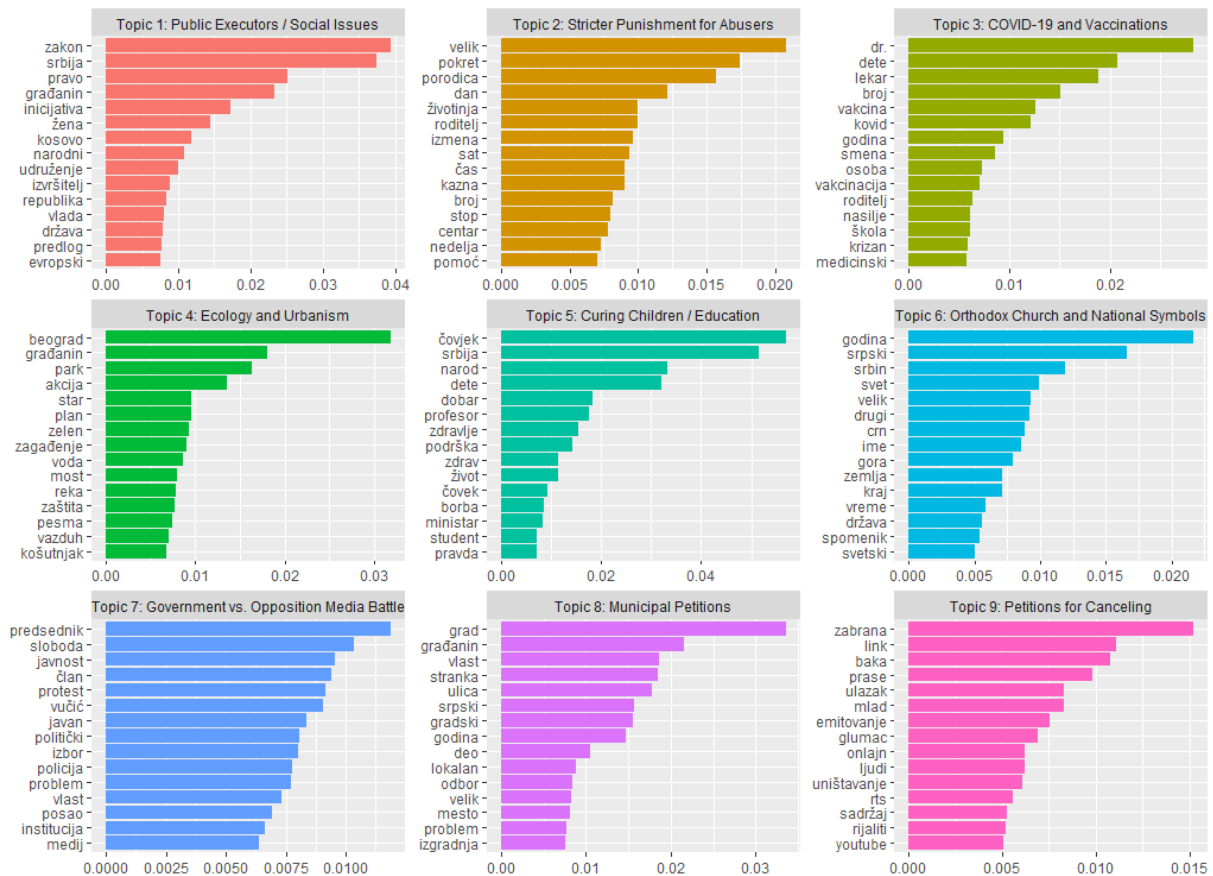
Culture related petitions before the pandemic focused on unifying the school curricula across the country, and naming streets or highways in the honour of late folk performers or TV hosts, while during the pandemic the focus was on cancelling actors and YouTubers accused of rape / bullying, standing up against genocide deniers in the media and demanding the withdrawal of national frequency licenses from government affiliated TV stations like TV Pink and TV Happy known for broadcasting and popularizing forms of culture considered illegitimate (“nekultura”).

The popularity of petitions aimed at banning reality shows and cancelling public funded New Year pop and folk singers’ performances with the aim of redirecting the funds towards curing sick children was reflected by the posts from both periods.

8.4 Topic modelling

Topic modelling was conducted using the LDA algorithm, while the optimal number of topics (k=9) was chosen by calculating perplexity and coherence scores. The subsequent LDA model recognized the following topics: (1) Public Executors / Social Issues; (2) Stricter Punishments for Abusers; (3) COVID-19 and Vaccinations; (4) Ecology and Urbanism; (5) Curing Children / Education; (6) Orthodox Church and National Symbols; (7) Government vs. Opposition Media Battle; (8) Municipal Petitions and (9) Petitions for Cancelling. Each of the aforementioned topics is represented by its most probable associated words in Graph 2 below.

Figure RS - 2 - Topic modelling results



Topic 1, Public Executors / Social Issues included petitions that dealt with helping materially or socially disadvantaged groups through formal initiatives for legislative reform and protecting them from existing institutions that were seen as predatory and unjustified (e.g., public executors). It was represented by words like “right”, “law”, “executor”, “woman” and “Kosovo”.

Topic 2, Stricter Punishments for Abusers dealt with initiatives aimed at protecting vulnerable groups like children and pregnant women, while a significant part of them also dealt with animal rights. Common request among these petitions was demanding stricter legal punishments for abusers and murderers, ranging from mandatory and stricter prison sentences, all the way up to life in prison. The topic was represented by words like “family”, “law”, “parent”, “punishment”, “stop” and “help”.

Topic 3, COVID-19 and Vaccinations included discussions about petitions related to the COVID-19 pandemic and government’s response to it, as well as debates about mandatory vaccinations, competence of the COVID Crisis Committee and the constitutionality of particular anti-COVID measures, like curfews and forced business closures. It was represented by words like “covid”, “vaccine”, “doctor”, “child”, “crisis” and “violence”.

Topic 4, Ecology and Urbanism focused on petitions demanding lower pollution of air and water, cessation of planned lithium exploitation in the western parts of the country by Rio Tinto, as well as cessation of building projects (mainly in the capital) deemed to be damaging to the environment or a significant waste of public funds. It was represented with words like “park”, “pollution”, “green”, “river”, “protection” and “air”.

Topic 5 Curing Children / Education dealt with petitions aimed at gathering funds for curing children with

serious illnesses for which treatment is not provided by the domestic health institutions. These also included several initiatives to cancel planned public New Year's parties and redirect the funds to some of the sick children. This topic was represented by words like "child", "health", "support", "life", "fight", "minister" and "justice".

Topic 6, Orthodox Church and National Symbols included petitions supporting the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro during its perceived prosecution by the Montenegrin government and the resulting massive protests. It also encompassed some municipal urbanism topics regarding monuments and national symbols. It was represented by words like: "Serbian", "world", "Montenegro", "monument", "end" and "state".

Topic 7, Government vs. Opposition Media Battle mainly dealt not with petitions in their strict sense (aimed at enacting a particular regulatory or executive change), but rather with public signaling of which public personalities were for or against the government and the president Aleksandar Vučić. The typical scenario would be a petition against a certain action of the government, or the president supported by a number of opposition-leaning public personalities, answered by a counter-petition signed by the public personalities supporting the ruling party and the president. Words that best represented this topic were "president", "protest", "freedom", "police", "government", "media" and "institution".

Topic 8, Municipal Petitions included a series of local initiatives for naming streets and squares, dealing with illegal building projects and solving municipal nepotism and corruption related to the ruling party. It was represented by words like "street", "local", "committee", "town", "party", "problem" and "building".

Topic 9, Petitions for Cancelling dealt with petitions for cancelling actors, musicians and social media personalities accused of bullying, rape or not reacting to violence. It also dealt with petitions for cancelling reality shows and national TV frequency licenses given to TV channels broadcasting them. Words connected to this topic were "ban", "reality", "entry", "actor", "destruction", "YouTube" and "content".

8.5 Petition platforms

As it was stated in the section 1.1, the most popular online petition websites in the dataset were <https://peticije.kreni-promeni.org> which originally started out as <https://peticije.srbijapokretu.org/> and <https://www.peticije.online/>. Together, they hosted more than 50% of the 25 most trending petitions during both of the observed periods. Other domestic websites specialized in petitions were present as well, like <https://www.peticije24.com> and <https://www.mcblack.rs> both of which are no longer active. Finally, there was a small number of posts sharing petitions from <https://www.change.org/>.

Other URLs extracted from the dataset (Table 1 below shows the top 10 by the number of posts containing them) included links to social media platforms where posts promoting the petitions were published (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube), petition organizers' websites ("Živim za Srbiju") or media outlets covering the focus of the petition and the number of signatures gathered (NIN, N1).

Table RS - 1 - Most Common Petition Websites

Website	# of posts
peticije.kreni-promeni.org	283
www.peticije.online	225
www.facebook.com	31
mcblack.rs	26
www.peticije24.com	22
zivimzasrbiju.com	20
t.co	19
www.youtube.com	19
www.nin.co.rs	16
www.change.org	15

8.6 Examination of trending petitions

In order to allow for a more detailed analysis of the 25 most trending petitions during both periods, two tables summarizing the titles of the petitions, their initiator/s, their addressees, the number of signatures they received and the topic they are most closely associated with were compiled and can be found below (Table 2 and 3, one for each period).

Table RS - 2 - Twenty-Five Most Trending Petitions on Facebook 2018-2020

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
"Stop the settlement of migrants"	Srpski pokret Dveri	Municipal Government	02/19/2020	6,156	Topic 8: Municipal Petitions
"Stricter punishment for animal abusers"	ORCA	Serbian Parliament	12/20/2018	25,000	Topic 2: Stricter Punishments for Abusers
"Abolish private executors!"	Živi zid Narodna jaka Srbija	Serbian Parliament	03/14/2022	N/A	Topic 1: Public Executors / Social Issues
"Stop the executors!"	Pokret za obnovu Kraljevine Srbije	Serbian Parliament	08/22/2022	N/A	Topic 1: Public Executors / Social Issues

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
"Protection of bees in Serbia"	NALED	Serbian Parliament	02/24/2020	3,471	Topic 4: Ecology and Urbanism
"Ban movement of children during the night"	Pokret za obnovu Kraljevine Srbije	Serbian Parliament	11/26/2018	275	Topic 2: Stricter Punishments for Abusers
"Release the whistleblower Aleksandar Obradović"	Private individuals	Public Prosecutor's Office	11/27/2019	16,000	Topic 7: Government vs Opposition Media Battle
"Kosovo is Serbia on Apple Maps"	Public personalities	Apple	11/19/2018	N/A	Topic 6: Orthodox Church and National Symbols
"Same books for everybody"	Tri Plus	Government	09/20/2019	7,156	Topic 5: Curing Children / Education
"Ban reality shows!"	U ime kulture	Government	06/24/2019	67,584/75,000	Topic 9: Petitions for Canceling
"Against pollution - We demand concrete measures!"	Ne davimo Beograd	Government	01/09/2020	18,449	Topic 4: Ecology and Urbanism
"Petition to name the Belgrade - Preševo highway by Mirko Alvirović, host of the SAT TV show"	Private individuals	Government	04/02/2018	N/A	Topic 8: Municipal Petitions
"Petition for the defense of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro"	Private individuals	Government	01/02/2020	13,386	Topic 6: Orthodox Church and National Symbols
"Let's be humane - New Year for a new life"	Zajednička akcija	Municipal Government	12/24/2019	33,510	Topic 5: Curing Children / Education

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
"Believers against honoring Aleksandar Vučić with the medal of St. Sava"	Deca Svetog Save	Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church	10/06/2019	2,321	Topic 6: Orthodox Church and National Symbols
"Life in prison for murderers of children and pregnant women"	Tijana Jurić Foundation	Serbian Parliament	08/23/2018	160,000	Topic 2: Stricter Punishments for Abusers
"Stop the mandatory vaccinations!"	Pravo na izbor	Serbian Parliament	02/26/2019	10,387	Topic 3: COVID-19 and Vaccinations
"Petition to condemn hate speech of Aleksandar Vučić"	Public personalities	Government	07/12/2019	N/A	Topic 7: Government vs Opposition Media Battle
"Moms are not alone!"	Mame su zakon	Serbian Parliament	12/15/2018	N/A	Topic 1: Public Executors / Social Issues
"Entrepreneurs are moms, too"	Mame su zakon	Serbian Parliament	10/19/2021	41,000	Topic 1: Public Executors / Social Issues
"Abolishing public executors"	Srpska radikalna stranka	Serbian Parliament	09/17/2019	100,000	Topic 1: Public Executors / Social Issues
"Return wolf Coka to her owners"	Private individuals	Belgrade Zoo	05/14/2018	3,000	Topic 8: Municipal Petitions
"Petition to stop the media and state sponsored harassment of Sergej Trifunović"	Private individuals	Government	10/27/2018	1,939	Topic 7: Government vs Opposition Media Battle
"Actors, artists and workers in culture support the civic protests"	Private individuals	Government	01/31/2019	418	Topic 7: Government vs Opposition Media Battle

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
"Petition to rename the Avde Karabegovića Street to Šabana Šaulića Street"	Private individuals	Municipal Government	02/23/2019	1,500	Topic 8: Municipal Petitions

As it can be seen in the Table 2, most trending petitions from the pre-pandemic period were most likely to have the Serbian Parliament as their addressee (10), followed by the government (8) and municipal governments (3). Other addressees included Apple, Belgrade Zoo, Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Public Prosecutor's Office. All of them had only one petition addressing them.

Table RS - 3 - Petition's Addressees for Twenty-Five Most Trending Petitions on Facebook 2018-2020

Petition's addressee	# of petitions
Serbian Parliament	10
Government	8
Municipal Government	2
Apple	1
Belgrade Zoo	1
Holy Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church	1
Mayor's Office in Belgrade	1
Public Prosecutor's Office	1

As far as the initiators of the petitions are concerned, civic organizations were the most common (10), followed by private individuals (7) and political parties (6), while public personalities initiated only 2 petitions during the pre-pandemic period. Civic organizations covered a wide variety of petition topics ranging from economic opportunities for entrepreneurial moms, over ecological initiatives, all the way up to defending the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro and banning reality shows. On the other hand, political parties focused mainly on social issues, primarily abolishing the public executors. It is worth noting that certain parties organized such petitions even while they had their representatives in the Parliament⁷ - that is, while they were able to raise awareness about a certain topic and get the Parliament to discuss it without gathering the legal minimum of 30.000 signatures.

⁷ <https://otvoreniparlament.rs/poslanicki-klub/350>

Table RS - 4 - Petition's Initiators for Twenty-Five Most Trending Petitions on Facebook 2018-2020

Petition's Initiators	# of petitions
NGO	10
Private individual	7
Political Party	6
Public personality	2

Just like with the political parties, the most popular topic of the period were social issues (5) among which 3 focused on abolishing public executors, while 2 focused on rights of moms. Social issues were followed by petitions participating in the media battle between the government and the opposition (4), and by municipal petitions (4). Petitions demanding stricter punishments for abusers and defending the Serbian Orthodox Church and national symbols were equally popular during the period (3), which can also be said for the topics of ecology and urbanism (2) on one side, and curing children / education (2) on the other. There was only one petition demanding cancelation of realty shows, and interestingly enough, there was also an anti-vaccination petition a full year before the outbreak of COVID-19.

Table RS - 5 - Dominant Topics in Twenty-Five Most Trending Petitions on Facebook 2018-2020

Topic	# of petitions
Topic 1: Public Executors / Social Issues	5
Topic 7: Government vs Opposition Media Battle	4
Topic 8: Municipal Petitions	4
Topic 2: Stricter Punishments for Abusers	3
Topic 6: Orthodox Church and National Symbols	3
Topic 4: Ecology and Urbanism	2
Topic 5: Curing Children / Education	2
Topic 9: Petitions for Cancelling	1
Topic 3: COVID-19 and Vaccinations	1

Most popular petition of the pre-pandemic period by the number of signatures was "Life in prison for murderers of children and pregnant women" which gathered 160,000 signatures and was spearheaded by the Tijana Jurić Foundation, an organization founded in honour of a 15-year-old girl who was abducted and killed in 2014. Petition to abolish public executors organized by the right wing Serbian Radical Party followed with 100,000 signatures, while the petition to ban reality shows was third best with 67,584 signatures.

It is worth noting the SRS' petition against public executors was only the most successful out of three petitions with the same goal, with the other two being organized by SRS' competitors for domestic right-wing votes, namely "Pokret za obnovu Kraljevine Srbije" and relatively marginal "Živi zid - Narodna jaka Srbija". All of the other trending petitions from the period gathered significantly less support.

Table RS - 6 - Twenty-Five Most Trending Petitions on Facebook 2020-2021

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
"Rio Tinto - Back off from Drina!"	Kreni-Promeni	Government	11/21/2021	293,922/300,000	Topic 4: Ecology and Urbanism
"Kosovo is Serbia on Apple Maps"	Public personalities	Apple	07/22/2020	N/A	Topic 6: Orthodox Church and National Symbols
"Stop Rio Tinto's Mine Destroying Serbia's Nature!"	Private Individuals	Government	11/14/2021	173,267/200,000	Topic 4: Ecology and Urbanism
"Ban Betting Shops and Casinos"	Public personalities	Government	09/10/2020	28,237	Topic 9: Petitions for Canceling
"Ban Baka Prase from YouTube for bullying and insults against other YouTubers and people"	Private Individuals	YouTube	12/14/2021	27,904	Topic 9: Petitions for Canceling
"Petition against the law on same sex couples (banning adoption)"	Public personalities	Serbian Parliament	03/20/2021	200	Topic 1: Public Executors / Social Issues
"Petition to get the best street cleaner in Prokuplje Aladin Eminović his job back!"	Private Individuals	City Sanitation (Prokuplje)	11/15/2020	1,702	Topic 8: Municipal Petitions
"Help stop hate speech-The Los Angeles Times denies WWII genocide"	Private Individuals	Los Angeles Times	02/08/2021	35,624	Topic 9: Petitions for Canceling
"Let's celebrate the lives of children!"	Kreni-Promeni	Municipal Government	12/13/2020	121,464/200,000	Topic 5: Curing Children / Education
"Petition to dismiss the Crisis Comitte"	Ujedinjeni protiv kovida	Government	07/27/2020	2,700	Topic 3: COVID-19 and Vaccinations

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
"Stop the discrimination and mandatory COVID vaccinations for children"!	Lekari za nauku i etiku	Government	08/18/2021	18,157	Topic 3: COVID-19 and Vaccinations
"Support for Bishop Grigorije against whom the regime is organizing a lynching campaign!"	Private Individuals	Government	07/12/2020	8,805	Topic 7: Government vs Opposition Media Battle
"Petition to abolish the unconstitutional 24-hour curfew"	Private Individuals	Government	04/03/2020	7,885	Topic 3: COVID-19 and Vaccinations
"Petition to allow taking pets for a walk for half an hour in the evening"	Pokret za obnovu Kraljevine Srbije	Government	04/01/2020	40,000	Topic 3: COVID-19 and Vaccinations
"Cancel Jala & Buba"	Private Individuals	Government	08/06/2021	69,607	Topic 9: Petitions for Canceling
"Return the normal working hours to the hospitality sector"	Ujedinjeni ugostitelji Srbije	Government	03/29/2021	7,030	Topic 3: COVID-19 and Vaccinations
"We demand pardoning of Desanka Maksimović"	Students of Serbian literature and language at the University of Novi Sad	Commission of the Institute for the Advancement of Education and Upbringing	06/06/2020	52,026	Topic 5: Curing Children / Education
"Support for president Vučić"	Public Personalities	Undefined	07/24/2021	100	Topic 7: Government vs Opposition Media Battle
"No to the stadijum!"	Kreni-Promeni	Government	08/26/2020	16,781	Topic 4: Ecology and Urbanism
"Withdraw licenses to Pink and Happy"	Kreni-Promeni	Regulatory Body for Electronic Media	04/27/2020	206,455/300,000	Topic 9: Petitions for Canceling

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
"Ban raw lignite sales"	Srbija u pokretu	Government	12/21/2020	39,436/30,000	Topic 4: Ecology and Urbanism
"Same rights for same sex couples"	Public Personalities	Serbian Parliament	03/20/2021	500	Topic 1: Public Executors / Social Issues
"Let bee keepers take care of their bees so that we would have food!"	Private Individuals	Government	04/03/2020	8,031	Topic 3: COVID-19 and Vaccinations
"Justice for Stefan"	Private Individuals	Government	07/23/2021	20,225	Topic 2: Stricter Punishments for Abusers
"Cancel Branislav Lečić"	Public personalities	Belgrade Drama Theater	04/08/2020	17	Topic 9: Petitions for Cancelling

Unlike during the pre-pandemic period, when Parliament was the primary addressee of the most trending petitions, during the pandemic period, Government led by a great margin, having 14 petitions address it as opposed to just 2 that addressed the Parliament. Other addressees of the most trending petitions included Apple (same petition as in the pre-pandemic period), Belgrade Drama Theater, City Sanitation in Prokuplje, Commission of the Institute for the Advancement of Education and Upbringing, Los Angeles Times and a municipal government, all of which had 1 out of 25 most trending petitions address them.

Table RS - 7 - Petition's Addressees for Twenty-Five Most Trending Petitions on Facebook 2018-2020

Petition's addressee	# of petitions
Government	14
Serbian Parliament	2
Apple	1
Belgrade Drama Theater	1
City Sanitation (Prokuplje)	1
Commission of the Institute for the Advancement of Education and Upbringing	1
Los Angeles Times	1
Municipal Government	1

As in the pre-pandemic period, civic organizations constituted the one of the largest categories of trending petitions initiators (9 petitions), while the share of petitions organized by private individuals rose to the

level of civic organizations (9 as well). Share of petitions organized by public personalities rose to 6, while share of petitions organized by political parties fell to just 1. Civic organizations primarily tended to focus on the COVID-19 pandemic and issues related to the environment, while private individual initiated petitions covered a range of topics: from COVID-19, over calls for cancelation and stricter punishment for abusers, all the way up to supporting a bishop harassed by the Government. Public personalities demanded things like not allowing Kosovo to appear as an independent state on Apple maps, banning betting shops, adoption rights for LGBT population and an unequivocal support for president Vučić (thus stretching the very definition of a petition, as this particular one wasn't addressed to anyone). The only trending petition organized by a political party during the period focused on anti-pandemic measures.

Table RS - 8 - Petition's Initiators for Twenty-Five Most Trending Petitions on Facebook 2020-2021

Petition's Initiators	# of petitions
NGO	9
Private individual	9
Public personality	6
Political Party	1

As expected, COVID-19 pandemic was one of the two most common topics dealt by the petitions of the period with the other one being petitions for cancelling. COVID-19 petitions (6) mostly rebelled against vaccination and anti-pandemic measures while questioned the competence of the decision makers who enacted them, while cancelling petitions (6) demanded cancelation of a wide variety of things, from actors accused of rape and YouTubers accused of bullying their suicidal colleagues, over LA Times columnists denying genocide, to rappers disrespecting their fans and reality show broadcasters.

Table RS - 9 - Dominant Topics in Twenty-Five Most Trending Petitions on Facebook 2018-2020

Topic	# of petitions
Topic 3: COVID-19 and Vaccinations	6
Topic 9: Petitions for Cancelling	6
Topic 4: Ecology and Urbanism	4
Topic 1: Public Executors / Social Issues	2
Topic 5: Curing Children / Education	2
Topic 7: Government vs Opposition Media Battle	2
Topic 2: Stricter Punishments for Abusers	1
Topic 6: Orthodox Church and National Symbols	1
Topic 8: Municipal Petitions	1

Ecology was a very popular topic during the period (4 petitions) with the first and third most popular

petitions (by the number of gathered signatures) aiming to stop exploitation of lithium in the country planned by Rio Tinto. Together, these two petitions gathered 467,189 signatures. Second most supported petition demanded withdrawal of national frequency licenses from TV channels broadcasting reality shows (205,436), while another petition that gathered more than 100,000 signatures during the period repeated the demand from the pre-pandemic period – to redirect the money for public New Year’s celebrations towards curing children.

8.7 Discussion and conclusions

The analysis presented in this report aimed to study the culture-related petitions organized in Serbia and promoted on Facebook during the pre-pandemic (2018-2020) and the pandemic period (2020-2021). Results presented above show that around a quarter of the 25 most trending petitions during both periods focused on culture. Some of the culture related topics remained relevant during both periods, namely demands for curriculum changes, redirecting public New Year celebration funds towards curing children and banning reality shows, while some were period specific. The pre-pandemic period had more street naming initiatives in honour of late folk singers and TV hosts, while the pandemic period was marked by a wave of petitions demanding cancelation of actors, rappers, columnists, and social media personalities. The most popular culture related petition during both periods as far as the number of gathered signatures is concerned is "Withdraw licenses to Pink and Happy"⁸ calling for withdrawal of national frequency licenses of TV stations allegedly breaking the domestic Law on Electronic Media by broadcasting mainly reality shows.

As far as non-culture-related petitions are concerned, their focus differed across the periods. The pre-pandemic period was marked by trending petitions demanding abolition of public executors and stricter punishments for abusers, while the pandemic period expectedly shifted the focus towards COVID-19 measures, as well as environmental issues. The presence of petitions aimed mainly at drawing media attention towards political preferences of public personalities (pro or against the ruling party) as well as petitions organized by parliamentary parties which have plenty of opportunities for dictating the Parliament’s agenda even without gathering 30,000 signatures, show a widespread domestic tendency towards using petitions as a means for political marketing. Finally, the fact that three right-wing parties organized the same petition (“Abolish public executors!”) at the same time during the pre-pandemic period further corroborates this thesis.

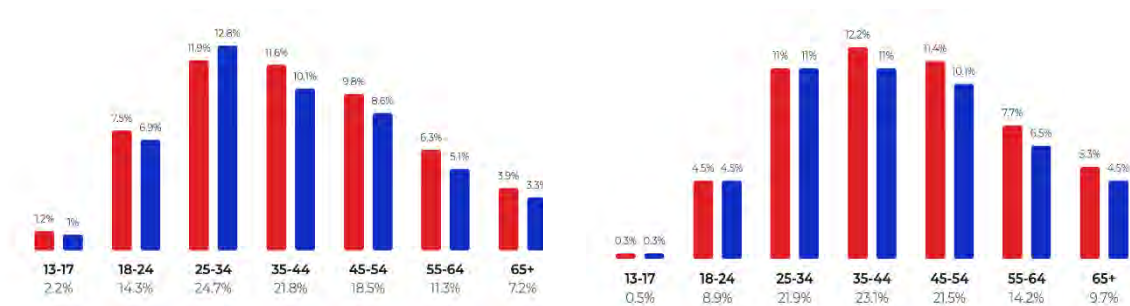
⁸ <https://peticije.kreni-promeni.org/petitions/oduzeti-dozvolu-pink-u-i-happy-u>

9. Findings for Spain

9.1. Facebook and petitions in Spain

In October 2021 there were 33,541,500 Facebook users, 52% of which were women. The left panel of Figure 1 shows the age and gender (women in red and men in blue) distribution of Facebook users in 2021. Women use Facebook more in all age brackets except for the 25-34 age bracket, the largest user group, where men outnumber women as Facebook users.

Figure ES - 1 - Age and gender distribution of Facebook users



2021: Source: NapoleonCat.com

2022: Source: NapoleonCat.com

In April 2022, almost a year later, the age distribution of Facebook user favours older users (see right panel of Figure 1). The age bracket 18-24 has gone down from 7.5% for women to 4.5%. The distribution from 35-44 years-old and above has increased.

Since January 2019, Facebook offers a new tool to collect signatures and create petitions to pressure politicians either to develop new laws or make certain decisions (Raya, 2019). Under the name of "Community Actions", Facebook users can create popular petitions with other users of the social network.

9.2. Data description

For the data scraping phase, the Spanish team scraped all posts featuring the word "petición" (in the Spanish language only) that were posted in Spain in the timeframe that was selected by all team members (1st of January 2018 until the 31st of December 2021). This search yielded 61,279 Facebook posts.

The posts collected have been filtered to eliminate those that were not related to culture. The Spanish team used the same keyword list that was accepted by the taskforce members, but translated it into the Spanish language, and adapted it when needed.

One last filtering was conducted during the topic modelling analysis. When obtaining the topics that emerged from the data, some topics included "noise". Such noise consisted of words that were not helpful for the analysis, such as the generic terms "petition", "año", "día", "junto", or "mes", "través", "web", "euro", "horario", "tarde", "parte". Therefore, such keywords were omitted from the topic modelling process in order to obtain cleaner findings.

9.3. Petitions about culture

As stated in section 1.2, a total of 61,279 petition-related Facebook posts were scraped with Crowdtangle. After filtering for only culture-related petitions, we were left with 26,184 Facebook posts. Thus, 42.7% of the petitions posted on Facebook from 2018 until 2022 related to culture.

The top ten most frequent culture-related keywords are: “arte”, “social”, “vecino”, “covid”, “comunidad”, “radio”, “musical”, “valor”, “hisotria”, “artista”, “creacion”, “lectura”. Such keywords reflect a “wide” sense of culture, with words such as “arte”, “artista” or “radio”, as well as culture in the anthropological sense, with words such as “social”, “sociedad”, “comunidad” and “vecino”.

Next, we examined the data in regard to likes, comments and shares for all data and for culture-related petitions posted on Facebook (see Table 1). We found that posts in our full dataset received a mean of 18.52 comments, 65.29 likes and 31.93 shares. Culture-related posts received a mean of 13.29 comments, 55.45 likes and 26.65 shares. Thus, we argue that there was minimal difference between general petitions and culture-related petitions in terms of popularity. We can see that general petitions received slightly more comments, whereas culture-related petitions had slightly more likes and shares.

Table ES - 1 - Spanish Facebook comments, likes and shares of all petitions and culture-related petitions

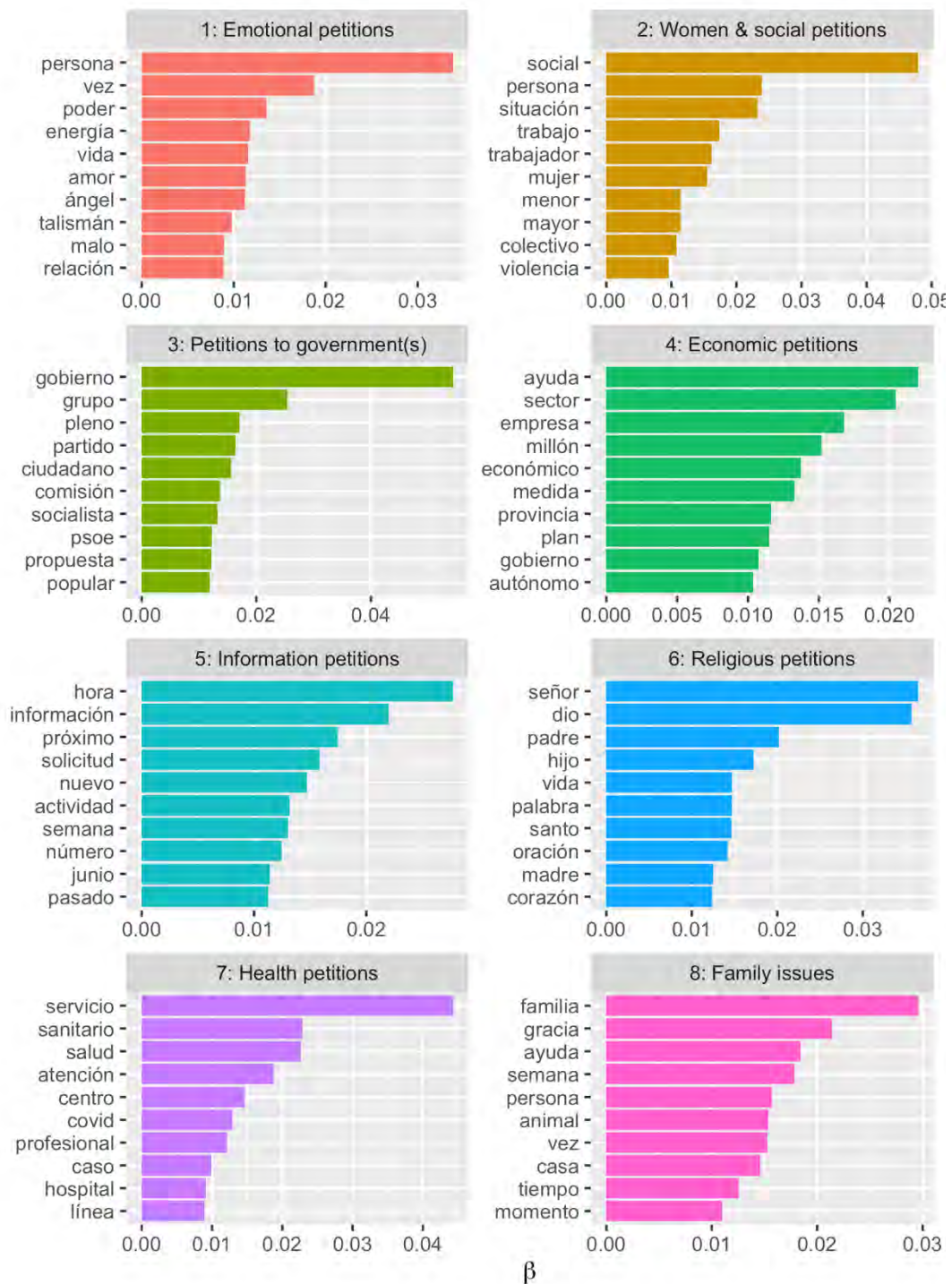
	All data	Filtered Data
Mean comments	18.52	13.27
Mean likes	65.29	55.45
Mean shares	31.92	26.65
SD comments	114,61	100.34
SD likes	583.06	586.27
SD shares	343.88	363.60

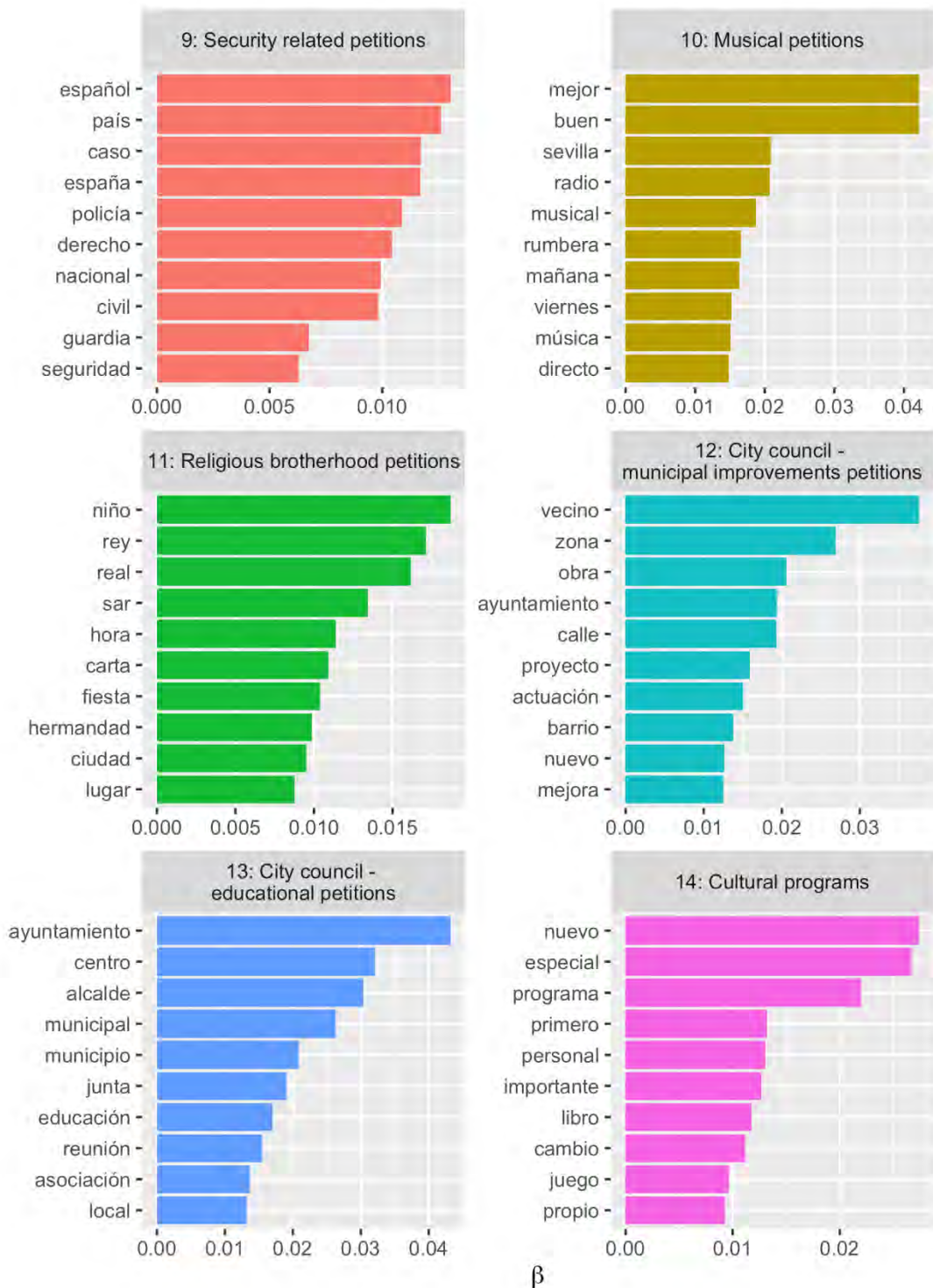
9.4. Topic modelling

In order to conduct topic modelling analysis on our filtered data, we first had to decide on the optimal number of topics. In order to do so, we calculated the perplexity (Griffiths & Steyvers, 2004), density based method (Cao et al., 2009), quality of the split (Arun et al., 2010) and coherence (Deveaud et al., 2014) via an LDA model. Based on the model, we chose to proceed with 14 topics (k=14). According to the density based method (Cao et al., 2009) and coherence (Deveaud et al., 2014), the model with 14 topics is the best model.

The model has identified the following 14 topics: 1: Emotional petitions, 2: Women & social petitions, 3: Petitions to government(s), 4: Economic petitions, 5: Information petitions, 6: Religious petitions, 7: Health petitions, 8: Family issues, 9: Police related petitions, 10: Musical petitions, 11: Religious brotherhood petitions, 12: Town hall - city improvements petitions, 13: Town hall - educational petitions, 14: Cultural programs (See Figure 2).

Figure ES – 2 - Topics





β

The text box below provides descriptions of the context in which the topic was identified. See, for example, that topic one is related to “emotional petitions” (talismán, amuleto) – to fortune tellers or devices that will help you achieve your wishes. Topic two, “women & social petitions”, is related mainly to social income, but more often than not the beneficiaries are women. Topic three is related to petitions to local, regional, and national governments. Topic four, “economic petitions”, is related to tourism, agriculture, and economic development. Topic five, “information petitions”, deals with requests for information. Topic six, “religious petitions”, includes Catholic petitions pertaining to health improvement or other issues. Topic

seven, “health petitions”, relates to health services. Petitions are addressed to hospitals or regional health services (providing health services is the responsibility of regional governments). Topic eight, “family issues”, is related to pets and children. Topic nine, “security-related petitions”, is related to topics of security guards, the enforcement of law and democracy. Topic 10, “musical petitions”, is related to petitions to radio stations. Topic 11, “religious brotherhood petitions”, is related to the main festivities in Spain, the three Magic Kings (to provide gifts to children in need) and the Eastern celebration (the organization of parades by religious brotherhoods). Topic 12, “city council municipal improvement petitions”, is related to the improvement of local infrastructure (purification plants, parking facilities, preservation of landscape, etc.). Topic 13, “city council educational petitions”, relates to the infrastructure needed to educate children, parks for children and sports facilities. Finally, topic 14, “cultural programs”, is related to publishing petitions, reading and sports.

Sentences classified in the topics

1: Emotional petitions

53580: Precious blue vicca talisman with a pendant that includes a goddess symbol in blue and a chain. This talisman will help you achieve all your purposes, it will help you with your...

61239: Pombagira amulet: powerful amulet that is used for everything related to love, sex, attraction and estrangement. It is suitable for all sexes and sexual conditions. ask for that...

46857: Talisman of the Yin Yang. Yin Yang is a principle of Chinese philosophy, where yin and yang are two opposite energies that are needed and...

2: Women & social petitions

52440: Xixon yes you can regret that “most applicants for municipal social income are going to receive a ‘no’ answer.

31946: Does the “social shield” resist you for being a migrant? We will talk live with Katty Solórzano about the procedures for benefits and aid during the health emergency. Tuesday 21...

28276: the council of ministers approved this Friday the minimum vital income, a household benefit that will be paid month by month and guarantees an income between 462...

3: Petitions to government(s)

49442: According to the annual report of complaints, suggestions and claims, requests from neighbors to the town hall about cleaning public roads have increased by more than 20% compared to...

58534: We care about our people, we attend to citizen complaints. The PSOE of Buja [Spanish city] applauds that the PP government team has taken this time into account...

49367: Live, starting at 12 noon, follows the advisory commission on appointments, relations with the Andalusian Ombudsman and petitions, with the hearing of...

4: Economic petitions

35755: El Faro de Vigo echoes the motion that we are going to present next Monday in plenary. The PP wants to transform the tourist policy of ...

36077: The Mayor accompanies farmers and ranchers in their claims. Mayor Santos and the local development delegate, Beatriz Roldán, have accompanied the farmers...

29980: 2.4 million to protect, recover, and promote tourist activity. The Provincial Council has presented the plan for the reactivation of Guipuzkoa, endowed with 2.4 million, and...

5: Information petitions

43677: Information of maximum interest for hundreds of neighborhood communities in the city.

50120: Donate blood on Monday January 28 there will be a blood drive in Arahál. It will be in the library of the Al-Ándalus secondary education institute during ...

22016: Sign up for the information service by Whatsapp of the City Hall of Altura. The City Council of Altura has launched a warning system for neighbors through...

6: Religious petitions

59920: Prayer of the day, pray in Lent, Ash Wednesday, February 14, 2018, 1st reading: Joel 2, 12-18, now - oracle of the Lord. Convert to me whole heartedly with fasting, with...

2617: Prayer requests for Mateo, for his rapid evolution, that there be no type of cardiovascular, neurological, or pulmonary sequelae. May it end clean and healthy for...

59851: Prayer of the day, to pray in Lent, Ash Wednesday, February 16, 2018, 1st reading: Isaiah 58, 1-9th this is what the Lord God says: "scream at the top of your lungs, do not hold back, raise your voice like a

7: Health petitions

60435: The commemorative acts of the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Osuna hospital, the mayor of Osuna, Rosario Andújar, and the deputy health minister of the board...

56617: The health professionals of Malaga maintain their protests. Health professionals from Malaga will meet again on June 13 at the clinical hospital...

16719: The Andalusian network of transfusion medicine makes an urgent appeal for blood donation after the Christmas holidays!! Blood is urgently needed from all....

8: Family issues

60954: Please maximum diffusion! As all of you who follow us know, we have made petitions to our town hall, denouncing situations of animal-oriented abuse.

57165: Tequila, welcome to greyhounds 112. A few days ago, Tequila turned up abandoned, wandering the road very malnourished and full of parasites. The person who rescued him...

11183: Cádiz situation: in approximately 15 days he will be able to travel to be adopted, he is a one-month-old baby who was rescued while he was sleeping, sheltering from the cold in...

9: Security-related petitions

57153: security guards declare war on private security regulations by sending their allegations. Security guards are beginning to mobilize on social media to...

57165: Cifuentes slips away from the press that intends to interview her by sitting on the bench for the false master's degree that dynamited her career and beheaded the [Madrid] community and the PP.

14184: We want justice: we have met with the Inter group of justification and memory of the congress of deputies to demand and promote the modification of the laws that are denying...

10: Musical petitions

5389: From 7 to 8 p.m. we leave you with Vicente Rufino, who will present you with the musical novelties of

the moment with a very personal touch and, in addition, musical requests and dedications

14734: New edition of today's mornings where we collect your very special requests and dedications, and share them with the entire audience.

23071: Start the mornings of the rumbera, your favorite songs, the best good vibes and your dedications, what do you want to hear?

11: Religious brotherhood petitions

38717: Official coronation of the Royal Postman and the Three Kings of the East and after a long journey, from the East to the Cabezas, the royal postman and the three kings...

51070: Nine floats will make up the parade of the Wise Rings next Saturday. On Friday the Three Wise Kings at the monumental cinema

61169: The most supportive Realejos, 133 children from 86 realejeros homes will receive the three kings through 'sponsor an illusion' program, private and collective godfathers and godmothers return to... (Los Realejos, Tenerife)

12: City council municipal improvement petitions

59947: The report on the allegations of Vuelta Ostrera (treatment plant) will be finished by Friday, February 23. All the actions that were approved in the budget of the...

61053: The works on the San Bernardo car park are progressing well. The repair and rehabilitation works of the car park began on November 10 and the development throughout...

13484: No more wind farms in the merindades, destruction of the chaste Cantabrian mountain of Cerro de la Maza in recent months. The Spanish government together with the Spanish electricity network are...

13: City council educational petitions

58182: The local council for children and adolescents in Noja (Cantabria) analyzes the situation of the parks in the municipality. The plenary hall of the town hall of Noja was the scene...

25277: The civic centers of Granada will have 8,000 surgical masks available for their doctors and nurses. The material has been donated to the city council of Granada by the neighborhood association.

38376: Institutional visit of the provincial deputy for sports to Puerto Real, the mayor of the city, Elena Amaya, has received the provincial deputy, Jaime Closet Limón, in her office.

14: Cultural programs

34434: Announcement: dear clients and friends, in view of the exceptional situation we are experiencing due to the covid-19 virus pandemic, the publishing house quitassence s.l. has taken steps to ensure the...

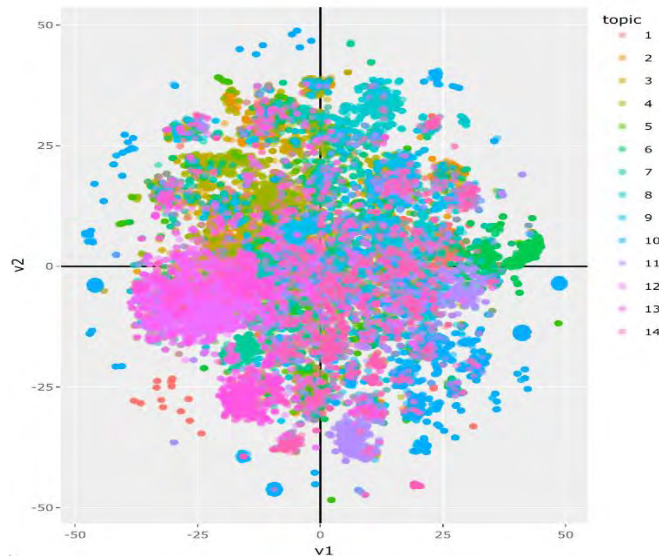
55596: News about the Spanish Red Cross-Córdoba Young reading is a new project that consists of bringing the culture of literature to young people...

24330: Almería was chosen by the international volleyball federation (FIVB) so that in the beach volleyball world series this sport would be valued to be Olympic

To explore the relationship between topics, we have conducted a non-linear dimensionality reduction with t-SNE. The result is shown in Figure 3. Looking at the topics' colours we can see that the first dimension locates topics 12, 13, 14 and 1, 2, 4, 7 mainly on the left, and topics 11, 10, 9, 8, 7 and 6 on the right. That is city council, cultural and emotional petitions on the left, and brotherhood, security, family, health and religious petitions on the right.

The second dimension, on the other hand, mainly separates topics 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 from the topics 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. That is, social, government, economic, information, religious and health petitions are separated from brotherhood, city council and cultural petitions.

Figure ES - 3 - T-SNE projection of topics

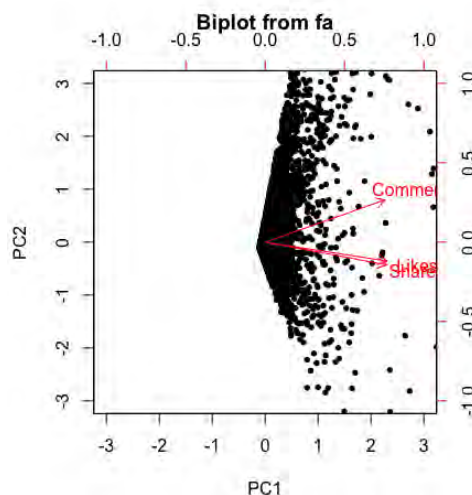


9.5. Petition platforms and addressees

The data has been ordered according to popularity, as measured by the number of comments, likes and shares. To determine which posts were trending, we conducted principal component analysis for the columns *Likes*, *Shares* and *Comments*. For the Spanish data, the first principal component explains 90% of variance in these three variables and loads strongly in all items (with loadings of 0.95), meaning the first component forms a scale of popularity. We can use the scores on the first to arrange posts according to their rate of “trending”.

The ranking formed with the principal components analysis is shown in the following figures. The first component ranks posts according to their popularity, but the second splits the posts according to the number of comments, the positive correlation, and the likes and shares, the negative correlation.

Figure ES - 4 - PCA of likes, shares and comments scores



The summary of the popular petitions is shown in Table 3. Unfortunately, we have found that most petitions were not channelled through a petition’s website (like change.org or peticion.es) or if they did, we could not find the URL. It seems that petitions have been channelled through media platforms: Facebook, YouTube, radio union, play radio, ondace.ro, eldiario.es, elpais.com, piensosolidariobasma.org (banco de alimentos), el independiente, .cadena SER. For that reason, in Table 3 you can see that most petitions do not have a specific address.

Table ES - 2 - Most common petition websites according to Facebook data

Petition address	N
Not available	19,152
bit.ly (shortened URL)	855
ow.ly (shortened URL)	217
facebook.com	204
YouTube.com	214
Atres.red	110
http:radiounion.es	71

As most petitions did not provide a URL (19,152), it is difficult to know the petitions’ addressees. The topics of petitions suggest that many are addressed to city councils or other governmental agencies by particular social groups or related to ordinary life. However, most petitions must have been channelled through other URLs. Facebook appears to have been used to promote these petitions, as is the case with change.org petitions. In fact, more than 1.7 million people follow change.org on Facebook.

For this reason, in describing the addressees of the most popular petitions, we will focus on the most successful petitions in Spain initiated on change.org, the one most popular petition platform in Spain.

9.6. Examination of trending petitions

In order to delve deeper into petition and their addressees, we have explored the most trending petitions on change.org in two time periods: the two years before the pandemic (2018-2020) and the two years of the pandemic (2020-2022). In this section, we include two tables which will summarize the titles of the petitions, their initiator/s, their addressees, the number of signatures they received and the topics with which we associated them, based on our topic modelling analysis. We accompany the tables with impressions and reflections regarding these petitions.

Before the pandemic, the most popular petitions are related to health (cancer research, euthanasia, rape, security, and women’s rights). Most petitions are addressed to the government or hospitals. In Spain, many services are decentralized, and regional or local governments are obligated to provide the services. However, most petitions are addressed to the national government (justice institutions, politicians, parliament, Carlos III Institute of Health, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, regional governments

(Navarra, Andalucía), Ministry of Education, city councils (Denia, Sevilla) and even Open University of Catalonia. Most petitions reported in the table have achieved their aims and been successful.

Table ES – 3 - Nineteen Most Trending Petitions on Change.org, Spain, 2018-2020

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Financien el proyecto de investigación contra el cáncer de la Universidad de Granada (Fund the research project against cancer at the University of Granada)	Sebastián Martín Recio	Ministra de Sanidad	Jun-13	1223380	Topic 7 - Health Topic 3 - Government
Ángel ayudó a morir a su mujer: que la Fiscalía no presente cargos contra él. (Ángel helped his wife die: that the Prosecutor's Office does not file charges against him)	Marcos Hourmann	Fiscalia de Madrid	Jun-19	608595	Topic 9- Police related Topic 7- Health
No habrá paz para los malvados. Para que los delitos sexuales contra menores no prescriban (There will not be peace for the evil ones. So that sexual crimes against minors do not prescribe)	Miguel Hurtado	Albert Rivera y otros 7	Jun-16	567262	Topic 9 - Police related Topic 2- Women rights
Despenalizar la eutanasia y el suicidio medicamente asistido (decriminalize euthanasia and medically-assisted suicide)	Texema Lorente	Comisión de Sanidad del Congreso de los Diputados	Jun-18	411938	Topic 9- Police related Topic 7- Health
No más muertes impunes en la carretera. (No more unpunished deaths on the road.)	Anna González López	Ministerio de Justicia	Jun-19	326331	Topic 9- Police related Topic 3 - Government
Dejen de discriminar a las mujeres científicas por ser madres (Stop discriminating against women scientists for being mothers)	María de la Fuente	Directora del Instituto de la Salud Carlos III	Apr-18	303161	Topic 2 - Women rights Topic 7- Health
Que salvar una vida no nos deje sin trabajo (That saving a life does not leave us without a job)	HEPA	Ministerio de Sanidad	Jun-15	273457	Topic 7 - Health Topic 3 - Government
Mi hijo también tiene derecho a recibir su medicamento para la enfermedad de Duchenne (My son also has the right to receive his medicine for Duchenne disease)	Enrique Munills	Consejero de salud Navarra	Jun-19	212078	Topic 7 - Health Topic 3 - Government
¡No me echen de España! Es urgente (Don't kick me out of Spain! It is urgent)	Moumine Kone	Ministerio del Interior	Feb-15	173904	Topic 3 - Government
Traigamos al pequeño Osman, con parálisis cerebral, y a su familia a España (Let's bring little Osman, with cerebral palsy, and his family to Spain)	Jorge Landete	Ministeri Asuntos Exteriores	Apr-14	167160	Topic 7 - Health Topic 3 - Government
Permitan a mi bisabuela Ana y a mi bisabuelo Francisco vivir juntos (Allow my great-grandmother Ana and my great-grandfather Francisco to live together)	Irene Leiva Fernández	Consejería de Igualdad y Políticas Sociales, Junta de	May-18	146734	Topic 3 - Government

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
		Andalucía			
Los jóvenes con discapacidad intelectual que aprueben la ESO también merecen su título (Young people with intellectual disabilities who pass ESO also deserve their degree)	Mónica Cañete	MINISTERIO DE EDUCACIÓN	Feb-18	141366	Topic 13-Town Hall-Education
No quiten a Julia ni a ningún niño enfermo el derecho a ser cuidado por sus padres (Do not deprive Julia or any sick child of the right to be cared for by their parents)	Sílvia Márquez	Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social	Apr-18	122734	Topic 7 – Health Topic 3 - Government
Justicia para Marta: denle la hormona a niños con Silver Russell (Justice for Marta: give the hormone to children with Silver Russell)	Lucia Lamantia	Hoispital Sant Joan de Déu Barcelona	Jun-19	122500	Topic 7 - Health
Concedan la nacionalidad española a nuestros niños (nacidos en España) (Grant Spanish nationality to our children (born in Spain))	Carmen Parra	Ministro de Justicia	Mar-15	119234	Topic 3 - Government
INDITEX: ¿No más maniqués anoréxicos! (INDITEX: No more anorexic mannequins!)	Anna Riera	Inditext	Feb-14	111082	Topic 2 - Women rights Topic 8 - Family
Petición de regularización de Gorgui Lamine que salvó de las llamas a un vecino en Dénia (Request for regularization of Gorgui Lamine that saved a neighbor in Dénia from the flames)	Vicente Bolufer	Alcande de Denia	Jun-19	89346	Topic 3 – Government Topic 12 - Town Hall
Que ser madre no sea un impedimento para terminar los estudios en la UOC (That being a mother is not an impediment to finishing studies at the UOC)	Raquel Suarez Domínguez	Universitat Oberta de Catalunya	Jun-15	55214	Topic 13-Town Hall-Education
Una calle para Ana Orantes en Sevilla (A street for Ana Orantes in Seville)	Juan Miguel Garrido Peña	Ayuntamiento de Sevilla	Jun-18	17007	Topic 12 - Town Hall

The main topics addressed in the petitions have been addressed to governmental bodies, and the content was mainly health issues, family issues, women's and social issues, security and education. Health issues have been related to cancer research, legalizing euthanasia, rare diseases, and taking care of children with illnesses. Family issues deal with children's health problems, taking care of children and the elderly. Women's and social issues deal with sexual offenses, gender discrimination and the negative impact of ultra-thin models (INDITEX). Security issues deal with legalizing euthanasia, sexual offenses and traffic casualties. Finally, educational issues are related to the rights of young people with learning disabilities to obtain secondary education degrees or the difficulties faced by young mothers trying to finish their tertiary education.

Table ES - 4 - Twenty-one most successful petitions on Change.org 2020-2022

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
No al desempoderamiento de las viudas: ¡Nos quitan la mitad de la pensión! (No to the disempowerment of widows: They take away half of our pension!)	Maria Eugenia Lopez Herrero	Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migración	Feb-22	117.203	Topic 2 - Women & social rights / Topic 3 - Government
Soy mayor, no idiota (I'm older, not an idiot)	Carlos San Juan de Larden	Banco de Santander y otros 7	Feb-22	647902*	Topic 8 - Family issues
¡Macrogranjas NO!: ni en Caparros, ni en Noviercas, ni en ninguna parte (NO to Megafarms!: neither in Caparros, nor in Noviercas, nor anywhere)	Greenpeace	Ministerio de Agricultura	Jun-22	440794	Topic 3 - Government
Unidades especializadas para los trastornos de la conducta alimentaria YA! (Specialized units for eating disorders NOW!)	Patricia Cervera	Consejero de Salud y Familias	Oct-21	382064*	Topic 8 - Family issues, Topic 7 health
Ayudemos a los refugiados de Ucrania, evitemos la tragedia humanitaria (Let's help refugees from Ukraine, let's avoid humanitarian tragedy)	Олеся Д.	President of Ucrania	Apr-22	323041	Topic 3 – Government
Gobierno de España: IVA superreducido para las mascarillas (Government of Spain: super-reduced VAT for masks)	Emilio Calatayud Ortega	Ministerio de Sanidad	Jun-20	249393*	Topic 7 - Health / Topic 3 - Government
Premio Princesa de Asturias para todo el personal sanitario por su esfuerzo y entrega (Princess of Asturias Award for all health personnel for their effort and dedication)	Diego Aldavero	Fundación Príncipe de Asturias	Jun-20	146973*	Topic 3 – Government Topic 7-health
Detengan el festival de la carne de perro de Yulin (Stop the Yulin Dog Meat Festival)	Fabrizia Cipolleta	Gobernador de Yulin	22-Jun-22	141057	Topic 3 – Government Topic 8, family
No retiréis el tratamiento a mi madre con esclerosis múltiple (Do not withdraw treatment for my mother with multiple sclerosis)	Teresa Castro	Junta de Andalucía	Jun-21	102120*	Topic 7 - Health / Topic 3 - Government
Soy sordo y las mascarillas opacas me aíslan ¡Homologuen YA las mascarillas transparentes! (I am deaf and opaque masks isolate me. Approve transparent masks)	Marcos Lechet	Ministerio de Sanidad	Jun-20	100995*	Topic 7 - Health / Topic 3 - Government

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
NOW!)					
Mi madre se ha suicidado. Hoy lo harán 10 más ☎Teléfono público de prevención suicidios YA. My mother has committed suicide. Today 10 more will as well. ☎Suicide prevention public line NOW)	Carlos Pérez Ballesteros	Ministerio de Sanidad	Jun-21	96299*	Topic 7 – Health Topic 3 – Government Topic 8 - family
¡Nuestros bosques se queman! Continuidad de los bomberos forestales todo el año YA (Our forests are burning! Continuity of forest firefighters throughout the year NOW)	Carlos Martín Díaz	Junta de Castilla y León	23-Jun-22	83478	Topic 3 - Government
Mi marido murió sin intimidad. Habitación individual para pasar los últimos momentos (My husband died without privacy. Single room for spending one's final moments)	Vanesa País Alvela	Servicio Gallego de Saúde SERGAS	13-Jun-22	78608	Topic 7 - Health / Topic 3 – Government Topic 8, family
Firma para que mi hijo pueda oír: llevamos meses esperando el implante que necesita (Sign so my son can hear: We've been waiting months for the implant he needs)	Carmen, madre de un campeón	XUNTA DE GALICIA	Jun-21	75136*	Topic 7 - Health / Topic 3 – Government Topic 8 – family
Una residencia YA para este señor de 80 años con alzheimer que está viviendo en la calle (A residence NOW for this 80-year-old man with Alzheimer's who is living on the street)	Inmaculada Campos Díaz	Ayuntamiento de Granada	22-Jun-22	72412	Topic 12 - Town Hall Topic 7 – health
Que la Sanidad Pública haga cribado del Cáncer de Próstata, el más común en España (Public Health should screen for prostate cancer, the most common in Spain)	José Carlos Delgado	Ministerio de Sanidad	May-22	62902	Topic 7 – Health Topic 3 - Government
¡Nos dejan sin futuro! Ayuden a recuperar la Sierra de la Culebra. (They leave us without a future! Help recover the Sierra de la Culebra.)	Sonia García Calvo	Junta de Castilla y León	25-Jun-22	59277	Topic 3 - Government

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Implantación de un Circuito Rápido Oncológico en el Hospital Marina Salut de Dénia (Installation of a Rapid Oncology Circuit at the Marina Salut Hospital in Dénia)	AMUNT contra el Cáncer	Hospital Marina Salut de Dénia	Apr-22	54840	Topic 7 – Health
Mi mujer falleció y nos dejan sin pensión de viudedad: ¡Pensión para parejas de hecho YA! (My wife passed away and they leave us without a widow's pension: Pension for unmarried couples NOW!)	Joan Rabasco	Ministerio de Inclusión, Seguridad Social y Migraciones	17-Jun-22	54496	Topic 3 – Government Topic 8 -family issues
¡Quiero poder tener acompañante tras mi parto en Segovia! (I want to be able to have a companion after my delivery in Segovia!)	Mamá Embarazada	Hospital General de Segovia	Jun-21	45048*	Topic 7 – Health Topic 8 – Family
Petición de auxilio para los gatos del Retiro (Request for help for the cats of the Retiro)	AGAR Asociación de Amigos de los Gatos del Retiro	Ayuntamiento de Madrid	Jun-21	25560*	Topic 12 - Town Hall Topic 8, family issues

Much like the trending petitions from two years earlier, the trending petitions between 2020 and 2022 were also mostly addressed to governmental and municipal bodies. Only two of them were initiated by an NPO, and almost all of them were initiated by private individuals (as in the previous two years).

The most popular petitions are related to health (food disorders, masks, committing suicide, conditions for dying, required surgery, need for shelter, health prevention, oncology, giving birth). The content of health petitions now is different than it was before the pandemic. Now petitions concern pandemic-related issues (masks) and health issues that were left unattended during the pandemic (surgeries, oncology, suicide, etc.). Before health issues were concerned with preventive medicine (cancer research, legalizing euthanasia, rare diseases, children) and taking care of children with rare illnesses.

Most petitions, more than before, are addressed to the government or hospitals, at national, regional or local levels. Most petitions, though, were addressed to the national government (Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migrations, Ministry of Health, Regional Governments (Galicia, Castilla-León, Andalucía), Ministry of Education, city councils (Granada, Sevilla) and even international government bodies (China, Ucrania). Most petitions reported in the table have achieved their aim and been successful, but not all of them.

9.7. Discussion and conclusions

The analysis presented in this report examines culture-related petitions and the ways they were circulated on Facebook and change.org. Understanding that the social discourse has been affected by the pandemic in recent years, we chose to include two time periods – the two years before the pandemic and the two

years during the pandemic.

Ultimately, we found that prominent themes and topics continued to dominate social discourse and bottom-up activism throughout the four years explored in this study. The model has identified 14 topics circulated on Facebook: 1: Emotional petitions, 2: Women's & social petitions, 3: Petitions to government(s), 4: Economic petitions, 5: Information petitions, 6: Religious petitions, 7: Health petitions, 8: Family issues, 9: Security-related petitions, 10: Musical petitions, 11: Brotherhood petitions, 12: City Council - municipal improvement petitions, 13: City Council - educational petitions, 14: Cultural programs.

Facebook data did not report the URL of the petitions. For this reason, we have also reported on petitions initiated on change.org, the most used platform in Spain, before and after the pandemic. The change.org platform includes information on the identity of the person or organization that initiated the petition, the petition's address, the content, the number of supporters and even whether the petition succeeded. We have categorized the petitions in accordance with their content.

The content of petitions changed before and after the pandemic. Before the pandemic, health issues focused on preventive medicine (cancer research, legalizing euthanasia, rare diseases) and taking care of children with illnesses. After the pandemic, petitions were concerned with pandemic-related issues (masks) and health issues that were left unattended during pandemic (surgeries, oncology, suicide, etc.).

10. Findings for Switzerland

10.1. Facebook and petitions in Switzerland

In Switzerland there are 3.5 million who use Facebook at least once a month, which accounts to 40% of the total population. The trend towards older users on Facebook that can be observed in other countries is also visible in Switzerland. Thus, half of all users are now 40 years old or older. Among younger people, however, Facebook is increasingly unpopular. Thus, only 3.8% of the population under 20 used Facebook in the analyzed time period. The largest group are people aged 30-39 with a share of 27% of all Facebook users. The number of users in this group has increased by more than a quarter during the last 5 years. The number of users aged 20 or younger, on the other hand, has decreased by around 85% during the last 5 years⁹.

Petitions in Switzerland can be directed at any government entity at the national, regional or communal level. In contrast to other countries, petitions do not have any formal requirements regarding the number of signatures. In theory, a petition can therefore be submitted by a single person. However, the addressed government body is only obligated to take note of the petition. It will usually only take action and answer to petitions with a certain minimal number of signatures (depending on the local circumstances)¹⁰. Importantly, petitions in Switzerland must be distinguished from initiatives or referendums which are more binding and result in a national ballot. Both of these instruments have formal requirements regarding the number of signatures needed.

10.2. Data description

Using Crowdtangle, the Swiss team scraped all posts from Facebook that were written in German¹¹, include the term “petition”, and were posted in the timeframe that was agreed on by all national teams (beginning of 2018 until the end of 2021). This timeframe was chosen because it covers two years before the outbreak of Covid-19 and two years during the following pandemic. It thus allows us to analyze whether petitions were different during the pandemic than before. It total, **6,932 Facebook posts** were scraped in this way.

Following this, we filtered the resulting data to find posts that are related to culture. To do so, we used a list of keywords related to culture that was created jointly by all national teams (based on answers from the INVENT survey). This list includes 118 keywords based on a wide definition of culture such as “arts”, “customs”, or “discrimination”. If a post includes one of these terms, it was considered to be about culture. **2739 posts** fulfilled these criteria. However, first analyses of the filtered data revealed that it still included many posts that are not directly related to culture. These were primarily posts about animal rights. In a second round of filtering, we therefore excluded post that include terms related to animal rights or that were posted by animal rights organizations. Thus, the final sample consists of **1993 posts**.

⁹ <https://bernet.ch/blog/2021/10/04/facebook-zahlen-schweiz-knapp-4-der-u20-nutzen-beliebtteste-social-plattform/>

¹⁰ <https://www.ch.ch/en/political-system/political-rights/petitions/>

¹¹ Other languages were omitted due to their low number of posts in Switzerland.

10.3. Petitions about culture

In total 28.8% of all scraped posts on petitions are categorized as being about culture. This share differs slightly between time frames with 24.4% before Covid-19 and 33.0% during the pandemic.

The ten most frequent keywords (see table 1) display a relatively broad understanding of culture. Thus, only two of these ten terms could be assigned to a narrow understanding of culture, meaning “culture as arts” (media, TV). All others describe different aspects of culture that come from a rather anthropological understanding of the term.

Table CH - 1 - Top 10 most frequent keywords (based on keyword list)

Keywords (original)	Keywords (english)	Frequency
Gemeinde	Community	220
Essen	To eat / food	201
TV	TV	151
Verein	Association / club	141
Covid	Covid	135
Schule	School	135
Bildung	Education	122
Medien	Media	122
Wert	Value	110
Gesellschaft	Society	106

Furthermore, we also analyzed whether post about petitions related to culture receive more or less comments, likes, and shares than other posts about petitions. Results are displayed in table 2. Thus, we find that posts in the filtered dataset (i.e. petitions about culture) receive less comments, less likes, and less shares than posts about petitions.

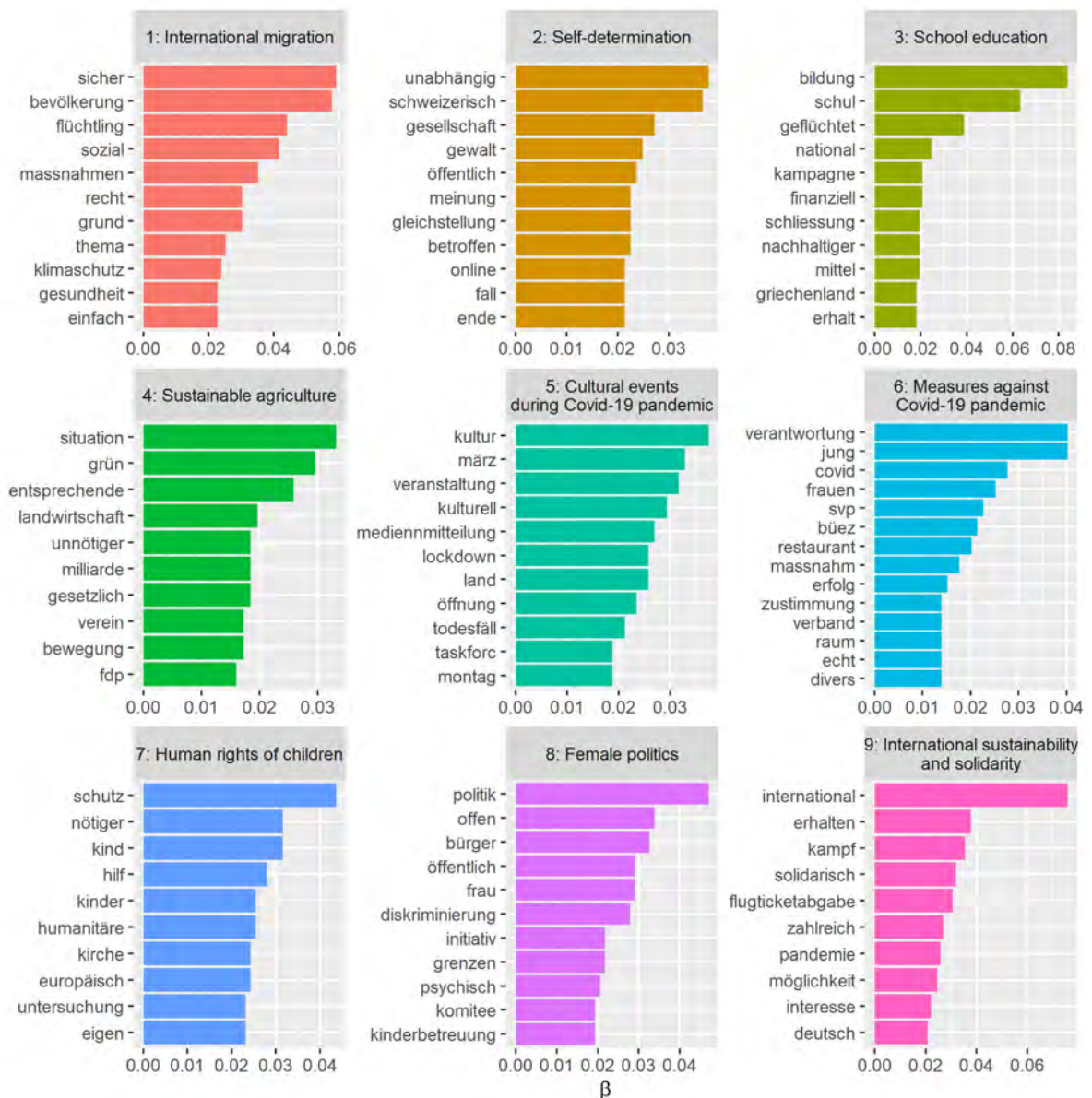
Table CH - 2 - Facebook comments, likes and shares of all petitions and culture-related petitions

	All data	Filtered data
Mean comments	17.20225	10.35324
Mean likes	63.43003	45.79428
Mean shares	41.87204	16.05871
SD comments	79.91804	67.58193
SD likes	264.70762	267.09294
SD shares	273.40582	84.48210

10.4. Topic modelling

The next step of the analysis is the identification of the most prevalent topics that culture-related petitions in Switzerland are concerned with. To detect the optimal number of topics k for LDA topic modelling in R, we inspected the results for $k=3$ to $k=15$. Using measures for perplexity and coherence as well as the semantic coherence of results in order to determine the optimal number of n , it appeared that nine topics best summarize the relevant topics that are discussed in petitions related to culture. In the following, the nine identified topics are thematically interpreted and shortly described (also see Figure 1).

Figure CH - 1 - Topics of culture-related petitions identified on Facebook in Switzerland



1. International migration

The first topic refers to petitions that deal with the consequences of international (“weltweit”) migration, especially the migration of refugees (“Flüchtling”). Most relevant in this regard are concerns about the security (“sicher”) in a population, other social (“sozial”) implications of migration, and the legal status (“Recht”, “legal”) of migrants. Migration seems to be seen, at least in part, as a problem (“Problem”) that requires certain measures (“Massnahmen”). Interestingly, migration is connected with concerns about climate change (“Klimaschutz”), which is a possible reason for international migration flows.

2. Self-determination

The second topic points to petitions that address the self-determination (“unabhängig”) of individuals. Self-determination can refer to Switzerland as an independent society (“schweizerisch”, “Gesellschaft”), which is in line with the politically neutral tradition of the country. But most prominently, self-determination refers to the equal treatment of women (“Gleichstellung”). In this respect, petitions deal with violence against women (“Gewalt”) – which more and more happens “online” – and with the subsistence of women (“Versorgung”) in relation with their role as mothers (“Mutterschaftsurlaub”).

3. School education

Third, culture-related petitions in Switzerland are concerned with school education (“Bildung”, “Schule”). Problems in this regard seem to be the closing of schools (“Schliessung”, “Erhalt”) due to financial restrictions (“finanziell”, “Mittel”), whether or not refugees should be admitted to schools (“geflüchtet”), and the importance of women as teachers (“Frauenstreik”).

4. Sustainable agriculture

The fourth topic refers to petitions that deal with a more sustainable way of agriculture (“Landwirtschaft”). Debates seem to circle around whether agriculture should be greener (“grün”), publicly subsidized (“gesetzlich”, “Milliarde”), or rather locally or globally oriented (“global”, “Chur”, “chinesisch”). Generally, unnecessary (“unnötig”) or dangerous (“gefährlich”) practices should be abolished (“Abschaffung”) because of their impact on society (“Auswirkung”, “Gesellschaft”).

5. Cultural events during Covid-19 pandemic

The fifth topic is related to culture in a narrower sense as it embraces petitions that refer to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on cultural events (“Kultur”, “Veranstaltung”). Petitions mainly aim at the “lockdown” of the public life and the re-opening (“Öffnung”) of cultural venues. Besides, economic consequences (“wirtschaftlich”) for the cultural industries are addressed.

6. Measures against Covid-19 pandemic

The sixth topic is also related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Unlike the previous one, however, this topic refers to more general consequences of the politically imposed measures (“Massnahmen”) to curb the pandemic. The debate seems to center on whether the responsibility (“Verantwortung”) for maintaining public health lies with the state or the individual. Young people (“jung”) in particular suffered from the measures and at the same time had the lowest health risks. But also the difficult working conditions of healthcare

professionals (“Spitalpersonal”, “schwer”, “Bedingungen”) are part of such petitions.

7. Human rights of children

The seventh set of petitions is concerned with the protection (“Schutz”) of children (“Kind”, “Kinder”). The main focus of this topic is humanitarian aid for children (“Hilfe”, “humanitäre”). But also the protection of children in Europe is addressed, especially with regard to sexual abuse (“sexuell”). The role of the church (“Kirche”) within this topic is somewhat ambiguous. In most petitions that include a reference to the church, the church is seen as an important supporter and facilitator of humanitarian aid for children. But in some petitions the church is also seen as an institution that children need to be protected from.

8. Female politics

Eighth, petitions address the openness (“offen”) of politics (“Politik”) and institutions of civil society (“Bürger”). Most prominently, this topic refers to discrimination against women (“Frau”, “Diskriminierung”) when it comes to access to public office (“öffentlich”). An important reason for this disadvantage can be seen in women’s responsibility for childcare (“Kinderbetreuung”).

9. International sustainability and solidarity

The final topic comprises petitions dealing with a sustainable way of economic activity (“Wirtschaft”, “erhalten”), with a special focus on the fight against increasing CO2 emissions caused by air traffic (“Flugticketabgabe”). This fight (“Kampf”) is considered “international” and requires the solidarity (“solidarisch”) of numerous (“zahlreich”) people. To initiate the process, the Covid-19 pandemic and its accompanying shutdown (“Pandemie”) is viewed as an opportunity (“Möglichkeit”).

10.5. Petition platforms

In order to examine the most frequently used petition platforms, we also extracted the URLs from all Facebook posts in our sample. Table 3 therefore displays the most frequently used URLs. One notices that the number of links included is rather low compared to the total number of posts. Most likely, this means that links to petitions are not explicitly written in posts but rather embedded in other text and thus not directly visible to users. Nevertheless, we find that act.campax.org is the most frequently linked petition platform in our sample. This is a platform that is hosted by a Swiss NGO and only used in Switzerland. Second comes bit.ly which is simply a link-shortener and can therefore not be interpreted. Third, we have change.org which is a popular international petition platform. On ranks four and five, we find psychologie.ch and evakuieren-jetzt.ch which both are topic-specific websites that only host their own petitions.

Table CH - 3 - Most common petition websites

Petition Address	N
act.campax.org	100
bit.ly	45
change.org	36
psychologie.ch	30
evakuieren-jetzt.ch	28

10.6. Examination of trending petitions

In this section, we take a more in-depth look at the most trending culture-related petitions in Switzerland. Therefore, we identified those 25 culture-related petitions with the most likes, shares, and/or comments on Facebook¹². We did this separately for two time frames, one before the Covid-19 pandemic (2018-2020) and one during the pandemic (2020-2022). This strategy allows us to track temporal developments in the importance of themes and topics that are addressed in petitions. In order to structure the description of the most trending petitions, we have grouped them into a smaller number of general topics. Each petition is assigned to one general topic; each general topic consists of at least two petitions.

Table 4 gives an overview of the 25 most trending petitions in the period before the Covid-19 pandemic. In this period, the bulk of the petitions inspected refers to two general topics: sustainability and human rights. Eight petitions were assigned to each of these general topics (16 out of 25). Hence, sustainability and human rights can be considered the most important cultural topics that citizens try to address in petitions in Switzerland in the period before Covid-19. However, looking at the petitions in more detail reveals a considerable degree of within-differentiation in each topic. Petitions calling for more sustainability refer to things as diverse as the use of pesticides, bike paths, forest conservation, air traffic, monocultures, nuclear energy, or industrial use of plastics (also see topics 4 and 9 in the topic modelling above). Petitions demanding respect for human rights refer to equal access to psychological treatments, the release of certain persons from prison, the sovereignty of Tibet, the abolition of child labor, equal access to education, sexual self-determination, or the right to strike (also see topics 2, 3, and 7 in the topic modelling above).

Other trending topics addressed in culture-related petitions in Switzerland prior to the Covid-19 pandemic include the misconduct of individual politicians (e.g. the mayor of a small town or the federal minister of foreign affairs), consumer protection (declaration of the ingredients of food, regulation of 5G mobile telephone services), migration and religion (regulation of international migration flows to Switzerland, construction of a mosque), and cultural events (noise protection regulations, live stream of female sport events).

In sum, even if we consider only the 25 most trending petitions, numerous aspects of culture are represented in petitions in Switzerland. They range from culture in a narrow sense (e.g. cultural events) to the clash of cultures (e.g. migration) to a broad spectrum of issues affecting the general way of life in Switzerland (e.g. sustainability, human rights). Hence, cultural issues are broadly demanded by citizens, and petitions seem to be a viable way to achieve cultural goals.

¹² Posts were ranked using PCA (see method section).

Table CH - 4 - Most trending petitions

Name/subject of petition	Topic	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressees	Petition Date	Number of Signatures
«Schluss mit hochgefährlichen Pestiziden, Syngenta!»	4: Sustainable agriculture	Public Eye	Syngenta	04/2019	ca. 38.000
Sichere Velorouten in Zürich	9: International sustainability and solidarity	SP Stadt Zürich	City of Zurich	09/2019	n.a.
«Keine Geschäfte mit Waldvernichtung»	4: Sustainable agriculture	Greenpeace	“the world's biggest companies and governments' leaders”	08/2019	n.a.
«Roger wake up now»	9: International sustainability and solidarity	n.a.	Roger Federer	01/2020	6,048
«Ja zum Klimaschutz! Ja zur Flugticketabgabe!»	9: International sustainability and solidarity	umverkehR	Federal Government	07/2019	17,858
«Kein Freihandel mit Palmöl!»	4: Sustainable agriculture	Bruno Manser Fonds	Federal Government	09/2018	16,551
Gegen die Wiederinbetriebnahme des AKW Beznau	9: International sustainability and solidarity	SP Schweiz	Federal Government	03/2018	n.a.
Grosse Konzerne sollen Plastik-Fussabdruck reduzieren	9: International sustainability and solidarity	Greenpeace	n.a.	10/2018	n.a.
«Hürden abbauen - Behandlung psychischer Krankheiten sicherstellen»	Human rights	Föderation der Schweizer Psychologinnen und Psychologen	Federal Government	11/2018	94,422
«Anklage gegen Sarah & Séan fallenlassen»	Human rights	Amnesty International	Government of Greece	11/2019	n.a.
«Grundrechte der Tibeterinnen und Tibeter schützen – auch in der Schweiz»	1: International migration	Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker	Federal Government	03/2019	10,277
«Stop Kinderarbeit in der Baumwollproduktion»	7: Human rights of children	Solidar Susse	Louis Dreyfus SA & Reinhart AG	01/2019	n.a.
«Freie Bildungswahl für	7: Human rights	Elternlobby	Cantonal	10/2018	>11, 000

Name/subject of petition	Topic	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressees	Petition Date	Number of Signatures
alle statt für wenige»	of children	Schweiz	Governments		
«Solidarität nicht mehr kriminalisieren»	Human rights	Amnesty International	Federal Government	08/2019	<30,000
«Nur Ja heist Ja»	9: female politics	Operation Libero	Federal Government	02/2019	1,365
Keine Entlassungen wegen Frauen*Streik am Kunstmuseum Basel	9: female politics	<i>not public</i>	Kunstmuseum Basel	06/2019	3'838
«Hetzerischen Gemeindeschreiber von Boswil entlassen»	Misconduct of politicians	n.a.	Community Boswil AG	12/2018	n.a.
«Ignazio Cassis muss zurücktreten!»	Misconduct of politicians	Junge SVP	Minister of Foreign Affairs Ignazio Cassis, Federal Government	06/2019	1,068
«Stoppen Sie die Ernennung eines Nestlé-Managers für die Leitung von Schweizer Entwicklungshilfeprojekten im Bereich Wasser»	Misconduct of politicians	Private person in cooperation with Wellington Water Watchers	Minister of Foreign Affairs Ignazio Cassis	10/2019	n.a.
Bessere Herkunftsdeklaration von Lebensmitteln	Consumer protection	Stiftung Konsumentenschutz	Producers and vendors of groceries	04/2018	n.a.
Rücknahme der Verordnungsänderung zu 5G Grenzwerten	Consumer Protection	Campax	n.a.	05/2019	n.a.
«UNO-Migrationspakt stoppen»	1: International migration	Aktion für eine unabhängige und neutrale Schweiz (AUNS)	Federal Government	11/2018	>15,000
«Baubewilligung für Erdogan-Moschee in Schaffhausen rückgängig machen»	Religion	n.a.	City of Schaffhausen	09/2018	12,772
«Petition gegen die neue Lärmschutz-verordnung bei Veranstaltungen»	Cultural events	<i>not public</i>	Federal Office for Public Health	08/2018	11,509
Live-Übertragung der Fussbalweltmeisterschaft	Cultural events	Schweizer Fußballverband,	Swiss Radio and Television	06/2019	n.a.

Name/subject of petition	Topic	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressees	Petition Date	Number of Signatures
der Frauen		Mattea Meyer, Cédric Wermuth, Sarah Akanji			

Table 5 displays the 25 most trending petitions during the Covid-19 pandemic (2020-2021). In contrast to the previous time frame, the composition of topics changed drastically. Thus, 14 of these 25 petitions concern measures against the pandemic (topic 6), among them are also the 5 most trending topics during this time frame. Most prominent in this group are petitions that aim at reducing the measures (“Lockdown Stop!”) or demand more transparent information about how the measures were decided (“Fairness in the Voting Booklet”).

In two cases, we also find a connection between topic 6 and topic 3 (school education). Thus, one petition demands that school classes are allowed to go to a camp together despite the pandemic, another demands that schools stop teaching in person and switch to online-schooling instead.

Two other petitions deal with topics concerning school (topic 3) but are not related to the pandemic. One of them asks that pupils are assigned to a certain school, the other proposes an updated syllabus.

Further, we also find two petitions that deal with cultural events and cultural workers during the pandemic (topic 5). The former demands that a certain event can take place despite the pandemic (“HERBSCHTMÄSS FIR ALLI UND JEEDE!”), the latter that cultural workers receive a basic income during the pandemic (“Finanzielle Grundsicherung»).

Topic 1 is also represented with two petitions. Both of them demand that Switzerland allows more refugees to enter the country.

Finally, we also find several petitions that cannot be assigned to one of the topics identified by our model. One of them demands a ban of hunting animals for trophies, another one asks that restaurants in Zurich are allowed to extend their outdoor seating space, yet another one wants to ban 5G, and a last one demands that bicycles do not need a reservation in Swiss trains anymore.

Most of these petitions are addressed at the federal/national government (18 out of 25). Others are directed at government bodies at the cantonal/regional or at the communal level. Only one petition has a supranational character since it is directed to all “citizens and governments of the world”.

Table CH - 5 - Trending petitions during Covid-19 pandemic.

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition date	Number of signatures	Topic
Fairness in the Voting Booklet - Federal Council and Parliament Deceive the Sovereign	Freunde der Verfassung	Federal Government	11.17.2021	71,202	6. Measures against Covid-19 pandemic
Ja zur Wahrheit	Neue Volkspartei	Federal Government	02.19.2021	69,63	6. Measures against Covid-19 pandemic

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition date	Number of signatures	Topic
Schützt die Kinder	Freunde der Verfassung	Cantonal Governments	08.05.2021	46,000	6. Measures against Covid-19 pandemic
Beizen für Büezer	Member of national council	Federal Government	01.25.2021	50,576	6. Measures against Covid-19 pandemic
Lockdown Stop!	Schwiiz Brandaktuell, SVP	Federal Government	02.10.2021	255'712	6. Measures against Covid-19 pandemic
ARRÊT DE LA CHASSE ANIMALE AUX TROPHÉES	Private person	Citizens and governments of the world	08.28.2020	69,081	Hunting Trophies
Covid-Zertifikats-Tests müssen gratis bleiben	Private person	Federal Government	09.22.2021	265,026	6. Measures against Covid-19 pandemic
Stoppt die Entmündigung der Eltern und Impfpropaganda der Kinder	Freunde der Verfassung	Federal Government	09.28.2021	59,000	6. Measures against Covid-19 pandemic
Wo bleibt die humanitäre Tradition der Schweiz? Jetzt Flüchtende aufnehmen	Private person	Federal Government	03.31.2021	8,884	1. International migration
evakuieren JETZT	Amnesty International CH	Federal Government	05.01.2020	50,458	1. International migration
Stand by your nurse	VPOD/SSP	Federal Government	03.24.2020	80,000	6. Measures against Covid-19 pandemic
Schluss mit dem Maskentragen für Schülerinnen und Schüler unter 12 Jahren!	Private persons	Cantonal Governments	02.05.2021	6,004	6. Measures against Covid-19 pandemic
Mehr Wow für Zürich	<u>Gastro Zürich-City</u>	City of Zurich	09.22.2021	22,000	Outdoor seating for restaurants
HERBSCHTMÄSS FIR ALLI UND JEEDE!	<u>Pro Herbstmäss</u>	Regierungsrat Basel-Stadt	10.25.2021	1,187	5. Cultural events during Covid-19 pandemic
Finanzielle Grundsicherung von 4000 Franken für selbständige Künstler*innen und	Private person	Federal Government	10.25.2020	15.84	5. Cultural events during Covid-19 pandemic

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition date	Number of signatures	Topic
Kulturschaffende					
Frühling2020 - Unabhängige Untersuchung der Covid-19 Massnahmen	Private persons	Federal Government	02.03.2021	55'557	6. Measures against Covid-19 pandemic
Petition zur Lockdown-Politik: Forderung von Transparenz und evidenzbasierten Entscheidungsgrundlagen zum zweiten Lockdown, zur Eindämmung der Covid-19-Pandemie.	Freiheitliche Bewegung Schweiz	Federal Government	02.13.2021	8841	6. Measures against Covid-19 pandemic
Riediker Kinder im 2022 in die 1. Klasse ins Schulhaus Talacker	Private person	Primarschulverwaltung Uster	09.22.2021	255	3. School education
Petition Klassenlager Durchführung	Private person	Cantonal Governments	04.03.2021	2659	3. School education 6. Measures against Covid-19 pandemic
Corona Ansteckung gesunder Rekruten umgehend verhindern	Private person	Federal Government	03.29.2020	11.86	6. Measures against Covid-19 pandemic
DEMONTAGE ALLER 5G-ANLAGEN (AUSSERHALB TESTGEBIET) AUFGRUND BUNDESRATSBESCHLUSS VOM 22.4.	Private person	Federal Government	05.18.2020	9.176	5G
Gegen die Reservationspflicht – Für ein offenes System Bahn und Velo	Pro Velo	Federal Government	05.28.2021	54'000	Public transport
Fernunterricht für Berufsschulen	Private person	Federal Government	11.09.2020	38.54	3. School education 6. Measures against Covid-19 pandemic
SCHWEIZ: ABSCHLUSSPRÜFUNGEN 2020 UMDENKEN! SCHWIERIGE ZEITEN ERFORDERN MODERNE PROBLEMLÖSUNGEN	Private person	Federal Government	03.23.2020	42.142	3. School education

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition date	Number of signatures	Topic
IMPF-PATENTE AUFHEBEN UND LEBEN RETTEN!	JUSO	Federal Government	02.02.2021	3190	6. Measures against Covid-19 pandemic

10.7. Discussion and conclusions

In this chapter, we have presented our analysis of Facebook posts regarding petitions in Switzerland during the years 2018-2021. We find that a substantial share of all Facebook posts about petitions concern topics that fall under a broad definition of culture. Using computational topic modeling techniques, we further analyze these culture-related petitions and find that they cluster around various domains of culture. These range from topics related to a narrow definition of culture such as “cultural events” to topics that define culture more broadly such as “migration” or “education”. We also find that the most prevalent topics before and during the Covid-19 pandemic strongly differ from each other. Thus, the trending topics before the pandemic were mostly about sustainability or human rights. During the pandemic, however, the discourse on Facebook was dominated by petitions on Covid-19 countermeasures.

In sum, these analyses show that people in Switzerland care about a wide range of cultural issues. Regarding cultural policymaking, two conclusions can be drawn from these findings: 1) access to cultural events is important for many people. Cultural policies should therefore make sure that people have access to cultural events and/or cultural products in the narrow sense. 2) people also care about many cultural issues in the anthropological sense. However, these analyses cannot make recommendations regarding the content of such cultural policies since interests may differ within populations.

A limitation of this study is certainly that petitions in Switzerland are considered to be a relatively informal tool of democratic participation (compared to initiatives or referendums). Thus, petitions seem to be a suitable tool to raise attention for issues that are supported by a relatively small part of the population. In consequence, we cannot know whether the most important topics identified in this study accurately reflect the preferences of the wider population.

11. Findings for the UK

11.1. Facebook and petitions in the UK

In the UK there are 44.84 million of Facebook users, 44% of which use the platform daily.¹³ According to Statista, the age group that uses Facebook the most is 25–34-year-olds, with 11.2 million users¹⁴. Since 2012, the participation of users aged 18 – 24 has declined from 24% to 16% in 2020. Users aged 65+ have increased their participation: from 4% in 2019 to 9% in 2020. Fifty-two percent of Facebook users are women and 48% are men.

One of the main online petition addressees in the UK is the Parliament.¹⁵ If a petition gets more than 10,000 signatures, it receives a response from the government. If a petition receives more than 100,000 signatures, it is considered for debate in the Parliament. So far, 665 petitions that were directed to the parliament received a response from the government, and 128 were debated in the House of Commons. Other popular online platforms for petitions in the UK include websites such as Change.org, or city council websites.

11.2. Data description

For the data scraping phase, the UK team scraped all posts featuring the word “petition” (in the English language only) that were posted in the UK in the timeframe that was decided by all team members (beginning of 2018 until the end of 2021). This search yielded 201,898 Facebook posts.

In the filtering process, and in order to omit the posts that are not related to culture, the UK team used the same keyword list that was accepted by the taskforce members. However, the UK team added different variations of certain keywords in order to ensure that these would not be omitted during the filtering. Such words include, for instance, variations of the word “culture” (“cultural”), or pandemic-related words (“COVID-19”, “corona”, “coronavirus”, “pandemic”). After doing so, the UK team found that many non-culture posts remained even after the first filtering process. Such posts were primarily related to animal welfare. Thus, a second round of filtering was conducted in which all animal-related keywords (for instance, “cats”, “dogs”, “animal”) were all omitted from the data.

One last filtering was conducted during the topic modelling analysis. When obtaining the topics that emerged from the data, some topics included “noise”. Such noise consisted of words that were not helpful in the analysis, such as “day”, “thanks”, “signature”, or “people”. Therefore, such keywords were omitted from the topic modelling process in order to obtain cleaner findings.

11.3. Petitions about culture

As stated in 1.2, a total of 201,898 petition-related Facebook posts were scraped with Crowdtangle. After filtering for only culture-related petitions, we were left with 69,634 Facebook posts. Thus, 34.4% of the petitions posted on Facebook from 2018 until 2022 related to culture.

The top ten most frequent culture-related keywords (based on the keywords the task force team compiled

¹³ <https://www.socialfilms.co.uk/blog/facebook-uk-statistics>

¹⁴ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1030055/facebook-users-united-kingdom/>

¹⁵ <https://petition.parliament.uk/>

were “art”, “book”, “social”, “community”, “event”, school”, “show”, “media” and “COVID” (see Table 1). Such keywords reflect a “narrow” sense of culture, with words such as “art”, “book” or “media”, as well as culture in the anthropological sense, with words such as “social”, and “community”.

Table UK - 1-Top 10 most frequent keywords (based on keywords list)

Keyword	Frequency
Art	26,737
Book	6,974
Social	6,433
Community	6,304
Event	5,012
School	4,786
Show	4,515
Media	4,112
COVID	3,999
Fair	3,440

Next, we examined the data in regard to likes, comments and shares for all data and for culture-related petitions posted on Facebook (see Table 2). We found that posts in our full dataset received a mean of 30.96 comments, 105.85 likes and 51.37 shares. Culture-related posts received a mean of 31.75 comments, 100.81 likes and 48.8 shares. Thus, we argue that there was minimal difference between general petitions and culture-related petitions. We can see that general petitions received slightly more likes and shares, whereas culture-related petitions had slightly more comments.

Table UK - 2-Facebook comments, likes and shares of all petitions and culture-related petitions

	All data	Filtered Data
Mean comments	30.96	31.76
Mean likes	105.85	100.81
Mean shares	51.37	48.8
SD comments	314.4	269.82
SD likes	959.33	905.68
SD shares	807.13	1,069.01

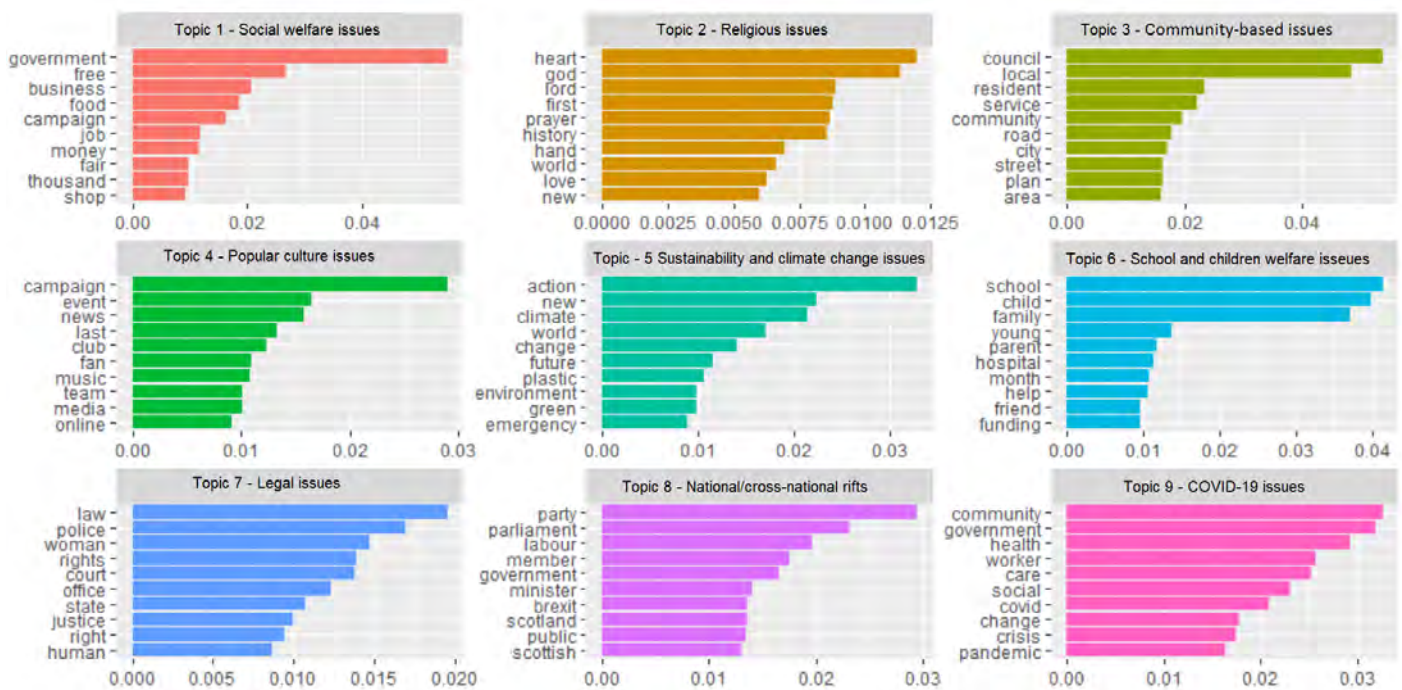
11.4. Topic modelling

In order to conduct topic modelling analysis on our filtered data we first had to decide on the optimal

number of topics (k). In order to do so, we calculated the perplexity and coherence via an LDA model. Based on the model, we chose to proceed with nine topics (k=9).

Then, we conducted our topic modelling analysis, which yielded the following nine topics: (1) Social welfare issues; (2) Religious issues; (3) Municipal/community-based issues; (4) Popular culture issues; (5) Sustainability and climate change issues; (6) School and children welfare issues; (7) Legal system issues; (8) National/cross-national rifts; (9) COVID-19 issues (See Graph 1).

Figure UK - 1 - Topic Modelling results



Based on the topic modelling, **Topic 1, Social welfare issues**, included petitions about governmental care of the British people. Such petitions included words such as “free”, “food”, “shop”, and “money”. Meaning, these petitions discuss the quality of life in the UK in terms of living expenses and the need for providing basic needs such as food security.

Topic 2, religious issues, included keywords such as, “god”, “lord”, and “prayer”. Such topic could reflect petitions that were specifically directed to religious practices and organizations. It might also be related to petitions that were meant to promote other causes but were religiously motivated.

Topic 3, Municipal/community-based issues, reflects the particular interest of petitioners in improving their local community, as reflected in words such as “community”, “road”, “street” and “local”. In such cases, petitioners turned to their local councils in their petitions rather than a higher governmental level.

Topic 4, Popular culture issues, includes everyday culture with petitions using words such as “club”, “fan”, “music”, “media” and “online”. Such petitions, therefore, relate to a particular content, individual, or group and fans’ activism to promote, or in some times, cancel, their production.

In Topic 5, Sustainability and climate change issues, the Facebook posts about petitions related to this topic regard issues of environmentalism and sustainability in light of climate change. Prominent keywords in this topic include the likes of “climate”, “plastic”, “emergency”, and “green”. Such petitions, therefore, reflect the current state of emergency and citizens’ urge to lower plastic use and shift to “greener” ways of

consumption.

Topic 6, School and children welfare issues, the sixth topic that emerged from the analysis related to petitions on children welfare in the school system and beyond. This topic includes words such, “child”, “parent”, “school”, and “hospital”.

Topic 7, Legal system issues, reflects petitions about law and order in the UK. Relevant keywords include “law”, “police”, “court”, and “justice”. Since “woman”, “human” and “rights” are also included in the list, we can infer that the petitions in this topic regarded human rights as well particular groups’ rights, such as women and the ways in which they are protected (or not) in the British legal system.

Topic 8, National/cross-national rifts involves petitions about Brexit, immigration and tensions with other countries, such as England versus Scotland. Topic 8 includes keywords such as “Brexit”, “Scotland”, as well as “Labour”, “party”, and “parliament”, thus reflecting inner and outer political tensions that necessitate the involvement of the parliament.

Lastly, **Topic 9, COVID-19** issues, includes petitions that were posted during the pandemic and regarded the different restrictions that were enforced in the UK since 2020. These are reflected in words such as “crisis”, “pandemic”, and “change”.

11.5. Petition platforms

As part of our analysis, we also explored the most used platforms through which people post petitions online (see table 3). The most common website was Change.org, an international website that is used to upload and promote petitions all over the world, as well as the UK. Interestingly, Change.org was used more often than the Parliament website, in which successful petitions are guaranteed to receive thoughtful attention from the parliament. This is perhaps because culture-related petitions are not necessarily directed to politicians or the government, but to other bodies. You.38degrees is a similar website so change.org, which allows people to post petitions in versatile topics and areas. However, You.38degrees is a UK-specific website and is not common in other countries.

Table UK - 3 - Most Common Petition Websites

Petition Address	N
Change.org	5,978
Petition.parliament.uk	5,222
Chng.it (another address for change.org)	2,039
You.38degrees.org.uk	979

11.6. Examination of trending petitions

Next, in order to delve deeper into our data, we explored the 25 most trending petitions on Facebook in two time periods: the two years before the pandemic (2018-2020) and the two years of the pandemic (2020-2022). In the following we section we include two tables which will summarize the titles of the petitions, their initiator/s, their addressees, the number of signatures they received and the topic we chose

to associate them with, in line with our topic modelling analysis. We accompany the tables with impressions and reflections in regard to these petitions.

Table UK - 4 - Twenty-Five Most Trending Petitions on Facebook 2018-2020

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Survivors of sexual violence are being denied support	Private individual	Prime minister	5/3/19	197,054/ 200,000	Topic 1 – Social welfare issues Topic 7 – Legal system issues
Save free TV	Age UK	Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak	11/6/19	634,334/ 100,00	Topic 4 – Pop culture issues
Piers Morgan for Brexit Party MEP	Leave.EU	Piers Morgan	10/4/19	8,983/ 10,000	Topic 8 – National/ cross-national tensions
Award knighthoods to our D-Day veterans	Leave.EU	Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Leader of the Conservative Party Theresa May MP	6/6/19	2,221/ 2,500	Topic 8 – National/ cross-national tensions
The UK should not agree the UN's Global Compact for Migration	Leave.EU	UK government and parliament	4/12/18	131,617/ 100,000	Topic 8 – National/ cross-national tensions
Award Knighthoods to Battle of Britain Veterans	Leave.EU	British Government – Honours Committee	10/7/18	48,489	Topic 8 – National/ cross-national tensions
Make it compulsory for schools to teach basic signing	Sign Along with Us	UK government and parliament	5/6/19	20,912/ 100,000	Topic 6 – School and children welfare issues
Keep our NHS out of US Tradedeals	Private individual	Prime Minister Boris Johnson	1/10/19	1,418,921/ 1,500,000	Topic 8 – National/ cross-national tensions Topic 1 – Social welfare issues
Lift the ban on vaginas at Edinburgh Fringe Festival	Private individual	The City of Edinburgh Council	11/8/19	4,618/ 5,000	Topic 1 – Social welfare issues
Ensure that the UK leaves the EU Single Market & Customs Union	Private individual	UK government and parliament	10/6/18	81,192/ 100,000	Topic 8 – National/ cross-national tensions
Petition rejecting calls to boycott Eurovision	We Believe In Israel	The BBC	1/4/19	6,373/ 7,000	Topic 8 – National/ cross-national tensions Topic 4 – Pop culture issues
#Notforchildren – ban energy drinks for under	Jamie	UK government	3/2/18	N/A	Topic 6 – School and

Name of petition	Initiator of petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
16s	Oliver	and parliament			children welfare issues
Continue to fund free TV licenses for the over 75 year olds	N/A	UK government and parliament	12/6/19	171,982/100,000	Topic 1 – Social welfare issues Topic 4 – Pop culture issues
We demand a Conservative and Brexit Party leave Alliance	Leave.EU	The Conservative Party and the Brexit party	11/8/19	29,067/35,000	Topic 8 – National/cross-national tensions
Give the electorate a referendum on the abolition of the House of Lords	Get Britain out	UK government and parliament	2/5/18	170,981/100,000	Topic 8 – National/cross-national tensions
Make Terry Crews the Live Action King Triton	Private individual	The Walt Disney company	9/7/19	403/500	Topic 4 – Pop culture issues
Revoke Art 50	Scientists for EU	UK government and parliament	11/2/19	150,531/100,000	Topic 8 – National/cross-national tensions
Keep Jeremy Corbyn	Labour Party Members and Supporters	Jeremy Corbyn	1/2/20	19,090/25,000	Topic 8 – National/cross-national tensions
The UK should not agree the UN's Global Compact for Migration	N/A	UK government and parliament	12/4/18	N/A	Topic 8 – National/cross-national tensions
Ban No Outsiders Scheme	N/A	UK government and parliament	2/1/19	N/A	Topic 6 – School and children welfare issues
Get Messi a retrospective ban for punching Fabinho in the head	Private individual	UEFA	5/4/19	16,158	Topic 4 – Pop culture issues
Protect food standards	Greenpeace	N/A	11/2/20	N/A	Topic 5 –Sustainability and climate change issues
Stop the “Migration Pact”	N/A	N/A	11/11/18	N/A	Topic 8 – National/cross-national tensions
Ban unnecessary plastic packaging	Green peace	UK supermarkets	11/8/18	N/A	Topic 5 – Sustainability and climate change issues
Better transport for disabled people	Private individual	N/A	7/9/18	N/A	Topic 1 – Social welfare issues

When examining the petitions that were trending on Facebook between 2018 and 2020, we can see that the majority (19 of 25) were **addressed to governmental bodies**, such as the UK government and parliament, the prime minister or heads of city councils. Other petitions, and mostly the ones that were

concerned popular, everyday culture were directed to commercial bodies such as **Disney, UEFA or the BBC**. Seven petitions were applied by private individuals, while the majority was sent through **organizations and political campaign groups**, such as Leave.EU. In fact, **Leave.EU** is responsible for several of the most trending petitions of this timeframe.

Only four petitions from the most trending list reached their signatures goal: (1) The UK should not agree the UN’s Global Compact for Migration; (2) Continue to fund free TV licenses for the 75-year-olds; (3) Give the electorate a referendum on the abolition of the House of Lords; and (4) Revoke Art 50. Since all four petitions reached their goal, they were indeed addressed by the parliament. In the case of the Global Compact for Migration and Art 50, the parliament did not agree with the petitions as these were against decisions that were already agreed by the UK government. In the case of the free TV license for 75+, the parliament is still in deliberation with the BBC about the issue. Lastly, following on the petition about the House of Lords, the parliament announced that a comprehensive reform of the House of Lords is not a priority of this parliament.

The main topics that were discussed during the two-years prior to the pandemic were Topic 8, National/cross-national tensions (11 times), Topic 4, Pop culture (six times), and **Topic 1, Social welfare (five times)**. The most common topic for petitions relating to national and cross-national tensions was **Brexit**, with petitions such as “Ensure that the UK leaves the EU Single Market & Customs Union” or “We demand a conservative and Brexit Party leave alliance”. As stated earlier, **TV license** was a trending petition relating to pop culture. This petition was joined by fan casting for a new Disney film as well as petitions regarding **football** and the **Eurovision**. The TV license petitions were also considered as social welfare issues, as they were focused on the elderly community in the UK. Other petitions in this topic were also focused on other, potentially marginalized communities such as **victims of sexual assault**, as well as **children and the hearing impaired**.

The most trending petitions on Facebook between 2018 and 2020 paint a tumultuous picture of life in the UK, which was mostly dominated by the discourse on Brexit. However, and despite trending on Facebook, most of the petitions did not reach their signatures goal. Even the ones that did and were indeed debated on by the parliament were not realized or executed.

Table UK - 5 - Twenty-Five Most Trending Petitions on Facebook 2020-2022

Name of petition	Initiator petition	Petition’s addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Protect our NHS in law now	N/A	Prime Minister Boris Johnson	4/3/21	404,782/ 1,000,000	Topic 1 – Social welfare issues
Precent gyms Closing due to COVID-19 spike	PureGym	UK Government and Parliament	2/11/20	621,440/ 100,000	Topic 1 – Social welfare issues Topic 9 – COVID-19 issues
Charmed Revival on Netflix	Private individual	Netflix and CBS television studios	10/8/20	69,492	Topic 4 – Pop culture issues
Make it compulsory for all schools & early years to teach basic signing	Private individual	UK Government, Department of Education	9/1 /20	117,816/ 150,000 link	Topic 6 – School and children welfare issues

Name of petition	Initiator petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
Let Comedian Roy Chubby Brown perform at The Sheffield City Hall	Private individual	Chief executive of Sheffield City Trust, Andrew Snelling	9/7/21	42,679/50,000	Topic 8 – National/ cross national tensions Topic 4 – Pop culture issues
Commit to a public review of HS2 project and suspend all on- going work now	N/A	UK government and Parliament	7/7/20	59,109/100,000	Topic 1 – Social welfare issues
Make verified ID a requirement for opening a social media account	Private individual	UK government and Parliament	10/3/21	696,983	Topic 7 – Legal system issues
Ban racists for life from all football matches in England	Private individual	The Football Association, Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Secretary of State Oliver Dowden	7/12/21	1,266,843/1,500,000	Topic 8 – National/ cross- national tensions Topic 4 – Pop culture issues
Remove the statue of James George Smith Neill from Wellington Square in Ayr	Private individual	South Ayrshire Council, Allan Dorans MP	10/6/20	1,172/1,500 link	Topic 8 - National/ cross-national tensions
Replace the Colston Statue with a Black Individual	Private individual	Bristol City Council	7/6/20	76,714/150,000 link	Topic 8 – National/ cross- national tensions
Reinstate the pre-2012 Overseas Domestic Worker visa with a route to settlement	Jeremy Corbyn	UK government and parliament	5/9/20	12,726/100,000	Topic 8 – National/ cross-national tensions
We demand an Orgreave inquiry for truth and justice	Private individual	Priti Patel, Home Secretary	11/11/21	1,754/2,000	Topic 8 – National/ cross-national tensions
Extend the Brexit transition Period	March for Change	UK government and parliament	6/4/20	25,828/50,000	Topic 8 – National / cross-national tensions
Food standard petition	National Farmers Union	UK government and parliament	6/5/20	~1,000,000	Topic 5 – Sustainability and climate change issues
Stop the erection Of racist Gandhi's statue in Manchester	Private individual	Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester	6/8/20	1,302/1,500	Topic 8 – National/ cross- national tensions
Free Nazanin Ratcliff	Private individual	Prime Minister Boris Johnson	3/8/21	3,775,555/4,500,00	Topic 8 - National/ cross- national tensions
War hero Tom Moore to be knighted	Private individual	Honours Committee	12/8/20	1,043,544	Topic 9 – COVID-19 issues Topic 8 – National/ cross- national tensions
Save our monuments and statues	Private individual	The British Government	4/8/21	12,222/15,000	Topic 8 – National/ cross-national tensions
State funeral for Captain Sir Tom Moore	Private	The British Government	2/4/21	242,348/	Topic 9 – COVID-19 issues

Name of petition	Initiator petition	Petition's addressee	Petition Date	Number of signatures	Topic
	individual			300,000	Topic 8 – National/cross-national tensions
Removal of statues in Birmingham (UK) linked to the slave trade or colonial history	Birmingham Anti-Racist Campaign	Councillor Ian Ward (Leader of Birmingham City Council)	7/3/20	657/1,000	Topic 8 – National/cross-national tensions
End the COVID- 19 lockdown	Private individual	UK Prime Minister	10/7/20	6,871/7,500	Topic 9 – COVID-19 issues
Restore the whip to Jeremy Coby	Reinstate Jeremy Corbyn	Labour Party	11/3/20	53,381/75,000	Topic 8 – National/cross-national tensions
Bring back Pierce Morgan	Private individual	ITV	3/10/21	56,445/75,000	Topic 8 – National/cross-national tensions Topic 4 – Pop culture issues
Remove Christopher Columbus statue from Sefton Park Palm House, Liverpool	Private individual	Joe Anderson (Mayor of Liverpool)	6/11/20	1,163/1,500	Topic 8 – National/cross-national tensions
Open gyms first as we come out of lockdown & fund a Workout to Help Out scheme	N/A	UK Government and Parliament	2/8/21	230,000/100,000	Topic 9 – COVID-19 issues

Much like the trending petitions from two years earlier, the trending petitions between 2020 and 2022 were also mostly addressed to **governmental and municipal bodies** (24 out of 25). Twelve petitions were initiated by **private individuals** (more than the previous two years), others were initiated by **political groups and also commercial companies**, such as PureGym.

Two petitions reached their signatures goal: (1) War hero Tom Moore to be knighted; (2) Open gyms first as we come out of lockdown & fund a Work Out to Help Out scheme. The first petition was not uploaded to the parliament website, but instead was posted on Change.org. Nevertheless, Moore, who died at the age of 100 after initiating the most popular fundraiser for the NHS during the pandemic, was indeed knighted as the petition requested. The second petition to reach its signature goal, to open gyms first after lockdown was discussed in the parliament and received the following reply *“Sports & physical activity providers play a crucial role in supporting everyone to be active. We continue to work with our partners to encourage the usage of sports facilities when they open in April”*. Thus, the petition received parliament’s attention, but it did not affect the parliament’s decisions.

Even though 2020 and 2022 were the years in which the COVID pandemic broke out, **only four petitions that were trending on Facebook were about the pandemic**. Moreover, some of these petitions were only indirectly linked to the pandemic, such as the two petitions regarding Captain Sir Tom Moore. Much like the petitions in 2018-202, the trending petitions of 2020-2022 were mostly about national/cross-national rifts. Petitions continued to focus on **Brexit**, with “Extended the Brexit transition period” or “Reinstate the pre-2012 Overseas Domestic Worker visa with a route to settlement”. Simultaneously, another prevalent controversy during 2020 and 2022 was **Black Lives Matter (BLM)**, which led to many petitions demanding the ban or removal of slavery-related **statues** and their replacement Black leaders: “Removal of statues in Birmingham (UK) linked to the slave trade or colonial history”, or “Replace the Colston Statue with a Black Individual”. Racism and cancel culture also led to petitions in the popular culture topic, including calls to

bring back controversial broadcaster **Piers Morgan**, or to ban racist fans from attending future football matches. Thus, even though a viral pandemic was spiralling in the UK between 2020 and 2022, it appears that Brits were more preoccupied by social controversies when discussing about petitions on Facebook.

10.7. Discussion and conclusions

The analysis presented in this report examines culture-related petitions and the ways they were circulated on Facebook. Understanding that the social discourse has been affected by the pandemic in recent years, we chose to include two time periods – the two years before the pandemic and the two years during the pandemic.

Ultimately, we found that prominent themes and topics continued to dominate the social discourse and bottom-up activism throughout the four years explored in this study. **Brexit**, for instance, continued to be supported or contested in various petitions before and after **COVID**. Moreover, the majority of trending petitions on Facebook during the pandemic concerned the BLM movement and reflected racial tensions rather than pandemic-related rifts.

The case of the petitions about the **removal of historical statues** is an interesting one as it brings together the two meanings of culture – the anthropological sense as well as culture as art. We can see how racist and anti-racists ideas are embodied in cultural artifacts such as statues and the great importance that people give statues, far beyond their aesthetic value. Thus, a recommendation to policy makers would be to be mindful of the political and social meaning and value of cultural artifacts, practices and events. These might be a catalyst for social controversy or an opportunity to bring people together, especially in a very heated social climate in the UK.

Another insight gained from this analysis is the value of petitions in the UK. As we learned from this examination, even petitions that were trending on Facebook **did not achieve** their signature goal. The ones that did, indeed receive attention from the parliament, but the parliament rarely changes its decisions because of a petition (at least in the case of the petitions examined here). Nevertheless, petitions are reflective of the social mindset of the people, and can sometimes lead to actual change, as was the case of the petition asking to knight Captain Tom Moore.

12. Discussion and conclusion

12.1. Social media engagement in cultural petitions

For all investigated countries, we examined the number of likes, comments, and shares for petitions posts in general as well as culture-related petitions posted on Facebook. We see differences in the levels of engagement for petitions in general and also those relating to culture, and differences in engagement between countries for both categories of petitions (Table 2).

Table 2 - Facebook post engagement on cultural and general petitions per country

	Mean comments		Mean likes		Mean shares	
	All data	Filtered data	All data	Filtered data	All data	Filtered data
Croatia	32.6	19.5	131.3	99.2	17.3	20.3
Denmark	43.7	27.3	140.4	116.6	33.1	33.3
Finland	15.9	17.3	94.4	112.1	14.1	16.3
France	31.1	30.8	77.9	102	89.7	148.3
Serbia	20.97	-*	155.59	-*	25.45	-*
Spain	8.5	13.3	65.3	55.5	31.9	26.7
Switzerland	17.2	10.4	63.4	45.8	41.8	16.1
The Netherlands	36	38	54	61	28	30
The UK	31	31.8	105.9	100.8	51.4	48.8

* In order to filter out the posts not related to culture, using the general keyword list (see app. 2) yielded no significant results for Serbia, as it resulted in an unchanged mix of culture and non-culture related posts while significantly reducing the dataset size. Therefore, the Serbian team analysed all the posts and determined the share of the petitions related to culture using the alternative approach of manually inspecting the most trending petitions.

In Croatia, Denmark, and Switzerland, posts on petitions relating to culture generated less engagement compared to petition posts in general. In Croatia, posts in the unfiltered dataset have an average of 32.6 comments, 131.3 likes, and 17.3 shares. In comparison, culture-related posts received on average less comments (19.5), less likes (99.2), but slightly more shares (20.3). In Denmark too, petitions relating to culture were, on average, less commented on (27.3), liked (116.6) and shared (33.3), compared to the whole data set before filtering out cultural posts (mean comments: 43.7, mean likes: 140.4 and mean shares: 33.1, respectively). In Switzerland, culture-related posts also had less engagement than posts about general petitions.

Contrarily, in Finland, France and the Netherlands, petitions relating to culture yielded, on average, more engagements. In Finland, posts on culture-related petitions received substantially more comments (17.3),

likes (112.1) and shares (16.3) than petition posts in general (15.9, 94.4, and 14.1, respectively). In France as well, culture-related petitions have a higher commitment, with an average of 30.8 comments (compared to 31.1 for all petitions), an average of 102 likes (77.9 for all petitions) and an average of 148.3 shares (compared to 89.7 for all petitions). In the Netherlands, culture-related posts received a mean of 38 comments, 61 likes, and 30 shares, which is somewhat higher than the overall engagement with petition posts on Facebook that received on average 36 comments, 54 likes, and 28 shares. In Spain, general petitions and culture-related petitions hardly differ in terms of popularity, with general petitions receiving somewhat more comments and culture-related petitions receiving slightly more likes and shares. In the UK too, there were minimal differences between general petitions and culture-related petitions: general petitions received slightly more likes and shares, whereas culture-related petitions had slightly more.

12.2. Popular petition platforms in and across countries

In each country, different platforms are prevalently used to initiate petitions. Most of these platforms are nationally specific. The international platform of change.org (with petitions being translated in different languages) is the most used platform across national borders. It should be noted, however, that for many petitions no source platform was found. This resulted in a large number of petitions with no other source than the Facebook post itself. In all investigated countries, a significant number of petitions was not retraceable to a common or institutional platform. With the URL missing, the Facebook post itself then becomes the equivalent of the petition source. The table below only displays the source petition platforms that were retrievable via URL's (so no Facebook pages nor shortened URL's such as bit.ly with unknown bases).

Table 3 - Top petition websites for each country

	1 st platform	2 nd platform	3 rd platform
Croatia	www.peticija24.com	www.change.org	www.peticijeonline.com
Denmark	www.borgerforslag.dk	skrivunder.net	
Finland	www.kansalaisaloite.fi	www.kuntalaisaloite.fi	
France	www.change.org	The National Assembly	The Senate
The Netherlands	www.petities.nl	www.degoedezaak.org	www.petities24.com/nl
Serbia	www.peticije.kreni-promeni.org	www.peticije24.com	www.mcblack.rs
Spain	www.change.org	www.YouTube.com	www.atres.red
Switzerland	www.act.campax.org	www.change.org	www.psychologie.ch
The UK	www.change.org	www.petition.parliament.uk	You.38degrees.org.uk

12.3. Addressees of cultural petitions

Considering the addressees that are spoken to through the petitions on these platforms, governments on different levels (local, regional, national, and very rarely supranational) are by far addressed most in all

investigated countries. Next to governments, commercial organizations and civil organizations are among the recipients of petitions related to culture.

12.4. Trending petition themes per country

When topically comparing between the nine countries of INVENT, many countries appear to share similar petitions topics. We compiled the country comparison into **seven** petition themes that were shared across the countries.

First, the topic of **children and education** was prevalent in Denmark, Serbia, Switzerland, France, the UK, Finland, and Croatia with petitions extending to various children's rights, from health, to security, and financial stability. For instance, in Croatia, a petition was formed to promote equally accessible, safe, and quality kindergarten for every child. In Denmark, a petition focused on refugee children and asked for better conditions in their temporary residences. In Finland, the issue of school bullying was discussed through a petition asking to address the problem of marginalization of elementary school children.

The second common theme is **Social /cultural equality and human rights**, which included vulnerable populations such as refugees, women, the LGBT+ community, and the disabled. Countries which featured petitions in this topic included the likes of the UK, the Netherlands, Spain, Finland, France, Serbia, Denmark, and Switzerland. Many countries had petitions regarding women's rights. Much like with children, the topics of petitions covering women's rights had a wide range – from discussing sexual assault victims in France and Serbia, to petitioning for the ban of “anorexic” mannequins in shops in Spain. Refugees were also included in this theme, with, for instance, Danish petitions requesting to stop the rejection of refugees and sending them to dangerous and insecure conditions. Lastly, the petitions included in this theme, and that featured in the UK and Finland dealt with the disabled. For example, in the UK a petition was uploaded to ask for better transport for disabled people.

Contested heritage and (cancel) culture were also a common petition theme throughout the countries. In the UK for instance, many petitions were posted in regard to the taking down of statues of racist individuals or slave owners. In the Netherlands, a popular petition requested to refrain from including Black Pete, a Blackface-like figure that was traditionally part of the Saint Nicholas celebrations in the country but is now heavily contested. In Serbia, for instance, petitions relating to cancel culture were quite popular. For instance, a petition asked for the banning of a YouTuber due to him bullying other YouTubers and people.

The fourth common theme in petitions across the nine countries was **national/international rifts**. For example, in Serbia a petition demanded to not allow Kosovo to appear as an independent state on Apple maps. Similarly, in the UK, many petitions were posted in regard to Brexit, demanding to continue with the process of leaving Europe.

Another topic, **climate change/sustainability**, was common in the UK, Finland, Croatia, Serbia, and Denmark. For instance, Croatia and UK petitioned against the use of plastic, while Denmark demanded a “climate law”, and Finland requested for flight tax.

Unsurprisingly, the **COVID-19 pandemic** was also prevalent in petition topics across the countries. In most countries, petitions were against the lockdown, restrictions, vaccines and the closure of cultural venues and sports facilities. For example, in the UK and the Netherlands, petitioners demanded to reopen gyms and other sports-related centres. The French petitioned for reopening the schools and in the Netherlands, petitioners asked to save the creative industries. In Serbia a popular petition demanded to stop mandatory vaccines. In Spain, a petition was created to raise awareness to the hazards of lockdown that could end up with the increase of suicide cases.

Lastly, **popular culture** was often featured in widely supported petitions in countries such as the UK, the

Netherlands, Spain, France, and Finland. For instance, in the UK, a popular petition requested the return of the TV show *Charmed*, while in the Netherlands, a petition requested to bring back Johnny Depp to the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise. In Finland, France, the Netherlands and the UK, petitioners also focused on football. In Finland, petitioners requested a construction of a new and improved football stadium, while in France, petitioners asked to bring back an ex-football player to play in an important game.

Ultimately, petitions' topics show many similarities across the countries, as exemplified above. The differences between the countries are mostly embodied in the particular focus petitions in each country placed within each theme. For instance, while all countries feature petitions relating to COVID, their emphasis was different – in the UK and the Netherlands, the focus was on reopening gyms, while in Spain citizens were more concerned about the implications of an elongated lockdown on mental health. When it comes to climate change, some countries such as the UK and Croatia focused on plastic use, while in Finland petitions requested flight taxes. Thus, all countries were concerned with similar causes, but the ways citizens suggested to tackle them, were sometimes different.

12.5. Timeframe comparison: petitions before and during the covid-19 pandemic

The two time periods covered in this report were mostly chosen because of the ongoing **COVID-19 pandemic**. Acknowledging that petitions from recent years might primarily focus on the pandemic, we decided to go back and analyze the two years before the pandemic, as well as the two years since the pandemic began. Interestingly, for some countries, we found little difference in the petitions' themes when comparing the two time periods. This applies to Denmark, Finland, France, and the UK, where other timely topics were more popular when it came to petitions on Facebook. In Denmark, for instance, more burning issues than COVID included hate and sex crimes. In the UK, for example, Brexit was a popular topic among petitions on Facebook in both time periods, regardless of COVID.

In Serbia, Croatia, Spain, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, the pandemic was much more central to petitioners. In these countries petitions were related to the various restrictions and limitations that occurred during the pandemic, and the demand to loosen them. In Spain, for instance, health was already a popular topic for petitioners even before the pandemic, but its focus shifts to pandemic-related repercussions during lockdown.

Alongside the pandemic, many countries saw an increase in attention to other current discussions about **cancel culture** and **Black Lives Matter**. In every country we observed different variations of petitions regarding social rifts and inequality, the demand to protect women, children and other marginalized individuals and an urge to make right of cultural artifacts that no longer fit the current discourse. While such topics were also featured in our first timeframe, they became much more manifest during the two years of the pandemic.

12.6. Conclusions and recommendations

Keep an open view on culture

This report demonstrates a wide variety of cultural themes that people across nine European countries deem it worth advocating for via online petitioning. The diversity of cultural themes that we found, stems from an open and broad conceptualization of culture that we employed in this research to explore the forms and types of culture that Europeans find worthwhile to petition for. Simultaneously, the diversity of cultural petitions that resulted from the exercise of data scraping, also confirms that such a broad conceptualization of culture is required to bring all cultural interests and forms of expression into view.

One recommendation for cultural policy that arises from this, is to employ an open and broad view on culture in cultural policy. Bringing the wide variety of cultural topics of interest into view is imperative to develop more inclusive cultural policies that makes culture accessible to all European citizens.

Digitalization of cultural offerings

Throughout Europe, cultural sectors have proven innovative in continuing their cultural activities as much as possible throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Many cultural organizations did this via digitalization of their offerings. Although this was often experienced as successful (or at least as better than doing nothing), the results of this analysis also point to profound dissatisfaction with cultural offerings during Covid-19. A considerable part of the petitions relating to culture during the Covid-19 outbreak call for a release of restrictions and reopening of cultural venues and continuation of events. This is especially the case in Serbia, Croatia, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.

The recommendation for policy that stems from this is two-sided: on the one hand, digitalization of culture in times of restrictions has proven a viable substitute for live cultural participation to events. However, policy makers that are highly enthusiastic about digitalization, ought to keep in mind that digital cultural events are not experienced in the same intensity and with similar emotional engagement as live events. Digitalization of culture can therefore never fully replace live cultural participations where people experience and participate in culture in real-life and in proximity of others.

The role of governments as petition addressees

E-petitioning is a form of civil involvement that is prevalent in all investigated countries, albeit to different extents. In France and the UK e-petitioning seems to be a widespread practice, while it is applied on a smaller scale in Denmark and Croatia.

E-petitioning lowers the threshold of political participation and societal engagement for many people, especially compared to the traditional form of paper petitioning. When looking at the recipients that are addressed through petitions relating to culture in the different European countries, we see that local and national governmental bodies are spoken to the most. In Croatia (local level), Denmark, Finland, France and Serbia respectively, there is a formal rule as to when (i.e., at what number of signatures) a governmental body is required to discuss or react to a petition or even put the issue up for vote.

While in many countries, these governmental bodies are addressed on general platforms where all sorts of topics, petitioners, and addressees can be found, in some countries, governments maintain their own e-petitioning platform. This is the case in the UK, but also happens at the European level, where the EU facilitates petitions directed to the European parliament.

Platforms that are directly linked to or even maintained by governments, signal that the opinions and input of citizens are taken seriously. The researchers of INVENT recommend all European governments (at various levels) to consider and explore the possibility of facilitating e-petitions via a government-related e-platform, to collect input and perspectives of citizens. Of course, taking such input seriously also means that governments should respond in a timely and serious manner to the viewpoints and requests expressed by citizens. Hence, an additional recommendation to both national and local governments is to explicitly formulate rules regarding government's responsibilities in dealing with widely supported petitions. Governments who formulate and live up to such rules render themselves more approachable, participative, and even more democratic than those who do not.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

Based on the method of data scraping, this report has shed light on levels of social media engagement on cultural petitions, being able to bring the most trending petitions before and during Covid-19 into view. We were also able to extract the main addressees and petition platforms used in the investigated countries. And finally, via topic modelling we were able to gain insights on the themes and topics related to culture that people deem worthwhile petitioning for. However, we have not been able to investigate more substantially the motivations and sentiments that are central to cultural petitions. For this, a more qualitative, content-focused approach is required. This is an important next step in the research on cultural e-petitions. While looking at the trending petitions before and during covid-19, we observed that petitions are not solely initiated for instrumental purposes: besides influencing policy and decision-making and changing a governments' course, petitions fulfil functions like the expression of dissatisfaction and frustration; forming or finding like-minded communities; alarming others, and probably much more. Therefore, additional, interpretative research is required to gain more specific insights into the motivations and sentiments that people have when they advocate for culture through online petitions, as well as the expectations they foster regarding the outcomes. In addition, longitudinal and monitoring studies of cultural petitions are important for bringing and keeping into view which cultural topics are contested and deemed important by citizens in different European countries. This kind of data can be beneficial to cultural policy makers in keeping up to date on the cultural themes that are relevant in society at large but might not be on the radar of policy makers (yet).

13. Literature

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14. Appendix

Table 2 - Keywords for filtering (common for all investigated countries)

Keywords				
dance	Cuisine	Heritage	music	song festival
appropriation	cultural heritage	History	musical	sport
architecture	cultural policy	immigrants	muslim	statue
archives	cultural sector	Migrant	neighbourhood	streaming
art work	Cultures	immigration	netflix	theatre / theater
artist	Customs	migration	newspaper	tour
award	discrimination	inclusive	opera	tourism
ballet	Diversity	inclusion	performance	tradition
band	Diverse	inclusivity	podcast	travel
book	documentaries	Islam	poet	tv
novel	Education	Jewish	poetry	television
border	entertainment	vacation	pop culture	value
building	Ethnicity	language	preservation	venue
cafe	Event	Lecture	prize	western
cancel culture	Exhibition	Library	broadcast	writer
carnaval	Expression	literature	racism	
christian	Fair	Market	radio	
church	Festival	Media	religion	
cinema	Film	Metoo	restaurant	
civilisation	Food	Modern	restoration	
clothing	Football	monument	school	
club	Foreign	multicultural	shop	
community	Gallery	municipality	show	
covid	Gaming	museum	social	
creativity	Habits	museum collections	society	

Illustration of the R code used in the analysis. The script was further developed in each country to correspond data- and language specific challenges.

```
# Open libraries and read data -----
-----

# Libraries

library(tidyverse)
library(tm)
library(tidytext)
library(topicmodels)
library(udpipe)
library(ldatuning)
library(LDAvis)
library(openxlsx)

# Read in the raw data

raw_CrowdTangle_data <- read.csv2("raw_data_data_location", encoding =
"UTF-8")

# Read in the keywords list
keywords <- xlsx::read.xlsx("keyword_data_location", 2)[,c(2,3)] %>%
setNames(c("original_keyword", "translated_keyword"))

# Add some word boundaries if necessary (examples in Finnish)

keywords[keywords$translated_keyword == "kirja", 2] <- "\\bkirja\\b"
keywords <- keywords[- which(keywords$translated_keyword == "kunta"),]

# Filter the raw data by whether any of the keywords are found from the
text

raw_CrowdTangle_data <- raw_CrowdTangle_data %>%
  mutate(Message = tolower(enc2utf8(Message)),
         includes_keyword = str_detect(Message,
paste0(keywords$translated_keyword, collapse = "|")),
         found_keyword = str_extract_all(Message,
paste0(keywords$translated_keyword, collapse = "|")),
         found_keyword = sapply(found_keyword, unique),
         found_keyword = sapply(found_keyword, paste0, collapse = ",
"),
         post_id = row_number())

filtered_CrowdTangle_data <- raw_CrowdTangle_data %>%
  filter(includes_keyword) %>%
  as.data.frame()

# Continue filtering: delete posts with frequent but irrelevant
keywords, for example

terms <- c("animal rights", "animal cruelty", "animal", "animals",
"PETA")
```

```

filtered_CrowdTangle_data <- filtered_CrowdTangle_data %>%
  mutate(Scope_message = str_detect(tolower(Message), paste0(terms,
collapse = "|")),
         Scope_page = str_detect(tolower(Page.Name), paste0(terms,
collapse = "|")),
         Scope_descpage = str_detect(tolower(Page.Description),
paste0(terms, collapse = "|")),
         Scope_descpost = str_detect(tolower(Description),
paste0(terms, collapse = "|")),
         Scope_link = str_detect(tolower(Link.Text), paste0(terms,
collapse = "|")))

filtered_CrowdTangle_data <- filtered_CrowdTangle_data %>% filter(
Scope_message == FALSE & Scope_page == FALSE & Scope_descpage == FALSE
& Scope_descpost == FALSE & Scope_link == FALSE)

# Descriptive analysis -----
-----

# Share of posts with targeted keywords from the whole data

nrow(filtered_CrowdTangle_data) / nrow(raw_CrowdTangle_data)

# Most frequent keywords

table(unlist(str_split(filtered_CrowdTangle_data$found_keyword,
" ")), %>% sort(., T) %>% .[1:10])

# Means and standard deviations of comments, likes and shares per post
in
# all data and filtered data

f <- function(d) {
  d <- d[,c("Comments", "Likes", "Shares")]
  tmp <- c(colMeans(d), apply(d, 2, sd))
  names(tmp) <- c(paste0("mean_", names(tmp)[1:3]), paste0("sd_",
names(tmp)[4:6]))
  tmp
}
data.frame(all_data = f(raw_CrowdTangle_data),
           filtered_data = f(filtered_CrowdTangle_data))

# Text cleaning -----
-----

# Preliminary text cleaning

clean_posts <- function(x) {
  x %>%
  # Remove URLs
  str_remove_all("?(f|ht)(tp)(s?)(:|/|\\.)(.*)[.|/](\\.*)" %>%
  # Remove mentions e.g. "@my_account"
  str_remove_all("@[[:alnum:]]{4,}") %>%
  # Replace "&" character reference with "and"

```

```

str_replace_all("&", "and") %>%
# Remove punctuation, using a standard character class
str_remove_all("[[:punct:]]") %>%
# Replace any newline characters with a space
str_replace_all("\\\\n", " ") %>%
# Make everything lowercase
str_to_lower() %>%
# Remove any trailing whitespace around the text
str_trim("both") %>%
# Remove emojis
str_remove_all("[:emoji:]")
}

filtered_CrowdTangle_data$cleaned_message <-
clean_posts(filtered_CrowdTangle_data$Message)

# Lemmatization and part-of-speech-tagging, for Finnish in this example

lang <- "finnish"

udpipe_res <- udpipes(data.frame(doc_id =
filtered_CrowdTangle_data$post_id,
text =
filtered_CrowdTangle_data$cleaned_message), object = lang)

# Further text cleaning: keep only adjectives, nouns and proper nouns.
# Discard all words that are shorter than 3 characters

tmp <- udpipes_res %>%
select(doc_id, token, lemma, upos) %>%
filter(upos %in% c("NOUN", "ADJ", "PROPN")) %>%
mutate(lemma = gsub("#", "", lemma)) %>%
filter(nchar(lemma) > 2) %>%
filter(!lemma %in% stopwords::stopwords(language = "fi")) %>%
select(-token, -upos) %>%
group_by(doc_id) %>%
summarise(clean_text = paste0(lemma, collapse = " "))

filtered_CrowdTangle_data <- filtered_CrowdTangle_data %>%
left_join(data.frame(post_id = as.numeric(tmp$doc_id), clean_text =
tmp$clean_text))

# Prepare function to create a document-term-matrix, which is the input
for topic modeling.

prepare_dtm <- function(data = filtered_CrowdTangle_data,
words_to_delete, words_to_replace, replacement,
term_min_freq = 9, answer_min_word_number = 2){

stopifnot("Words to replace and replacement have different length" =
length(words_to_replace) == length(replacement))

if(!is.null(words_to_replace)){
for(i in seq_along(words_to_replace)) data$clean_text <-
gsub(words_to_replace[i], replacement[i], data$clean_text)
}
}

```

```

dtm <- data %>%
  select(post_id, clean_text) %>%
  unnest_tokens(word, clean_text) %>%
  count(post_id, word, sort = TRUE) %>%
  cast_dtm(post_id, word, n)

dtm_reduced <- dtm[, slam::col_sums(dtm) >= term_min_freq]

if(!is.null(words_to_delete)) dtm_reduced <- dtm_reduced[, -
which(dtm_reduced$dimnames$Terms %in% words_to_delete)]
dtm_reduced <- dtm_reduced[, -
which(is.na(dtm_reduced$dimnames$Terms))]

if(any(is.na(dtm_reduced$dimnames$Terms))) dtm_reduced <-
dtm_reduced[, - which(is.na(dtm_reduced$dimnames$Terms))]
dtm_reduced <- dtm_reduced[slam::row_sums(dtm_reduced) >=
answer_min_word_number, ]

  dtm_reduced
}

# Specify
# 1) words to be removed
# 2.1) words that are in incorrect form
# 2.2) correct form for these words

words_to_delete <- c()

words_to_replace <- c()
replacement <- c()

# Create document-term-matrix

dtm <- prepare_dtm(words_to_delete = words_to_delete,
                  words_to_replace = words_to_replace,
                  replacement = replacement)

# Modelling -----
-----

# Create topic model with desired value for k

topicmodels_res <- LDA(dtm, k = 13, method = "Gibbs")

# Further analysis -----
-----

# Extract URLs from posts

url_pattern <- "http[s]?://(?:[a-zA-Z]|[0-9]|[$-
_@.&+]|[*\\(\\)],|(?:%[0-9a-fA-F][0-9a-fA-F]))+"

f <- function(string){
  if(is.na(string)) return(NA)

```



```

else {
  tmp <- str_split(string, "/")
  tmp <- unlist(tmp)
  tmp <- tmp[1:3]
  tmp <- unname(tmp)
  paste0(tmp, collapse = "")
}
}

filtered_CrowdTangle_data %>%
  as_tibble() %>%
  select(post_id, Message) %>%
  mutate(url = str_extract(Message, url_pattern)) %>%
  mutate(short_url = sapply(url, f)) %>%
  count(short_url, sort = TRUE)

# Find trending petitions: apply principal component analysis for
# comments, likes and shares

tmp <- filtered_CrowdTangle_data %>%
  as_tibble() %>%
  select(post_id, Likes, Shares, Comments)

pca_res <- psych::principal(scale(tmp[2:4]), nfactors = 2, rotate =
"none")

# Create excel file for close reading of the trending petitions pre-
and
# during covid-19

most_probable_topic <- data.frame(
  topic = factor(apply(topicmodels_res@gamma, 1, which.max)),
  post_id = as.numeric(topicmodels_res@documents))

trending_petitions <- pca_res$scores %>%
  as_tibble() %>%
  mutate(post_id = filtered_CrowdTangle_data$post_id,
  Message = filtered_CrowdTangle_data$Message,
  found_keyword = filtered_CrowdTangle_data$found_keyword,
  likes = filtered_CrowdTangle_data$Likes,
  shares = filtered_CrowdTangle_data$Shares,
  comments = filtered_CrowdTangle_data$Comments,
  facebook_url = filtered_CrowdTangle_data$URL,
  url_provided_by_CrowdTangle = filtered_CrowdTangle_data$link,
  url_found_by_regex = str_extract(Message, url_pattern),
  time =
lubridate::dmy(filtered_CrowdTangle_data$Post.Created.Date),
  before_covid = time < as.Date("2020-03-01")) %>%
  left_join(most_probable_topic) %>%
  group_by(before_covid) %>%
  arrange(desc(PC1)) %>%
  slice_head(., n = 200) %>%
  select(-"PC1", -"PC2") %>%
  mutate(among_25_to_present = NA)

```

```
write.xlsx(list(
  Before_covid = trending_petitions[trending_petitions$before_covid, ],
  After_covid = trending_petitions[!trending_petitions$before_covid, ]),
  file = "Trending_posts.xlsx",
  overwrite = TRUE)
```

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