"Dragen van mondkapjes niet nodig "

"mondkapjes zijn verplicht"

How the Netherlands dealt with the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic

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Introduction

❏ The COVID-19 pandemic is the first worldwide crisis occurring at a time when social media and the Internet have become prominent outlets of information production and consumption

❏ Social media can be an effective tool for enhancing situational awareness of crisis, both for citizens and for response organizations (Palen and Liu, 2007; Palen et al., 2009; Olteanu et al., 2015; Imran et al., 2015)

❏ Institutions and response organizations struggle in an effective use of social media for crisis communication strategies (Acar and Muraki, 2011; Hughes and Palen, 2012; Jin et al., 2014; van der Meer and Verhoeven, 2013).

→ There is a need to further investigate how to use social media effectively to manage crises

The Netherlands: A case study

❏ The Netherlands had a peculiar political landscape during the first wave of the pandemic
  ❏ Dutch child care benefits scandal (toeslagen affaire)
  ❏ The General elections coming up

❏ Unique approach to COVID-19 compared to most other European countries
  ❏ strictness of the measures and infrastructure of testing and vaccination

The goal of the research is to explore..

how different authoritative groups in The Netherlands used Twitter as a tool for crisis communication during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic
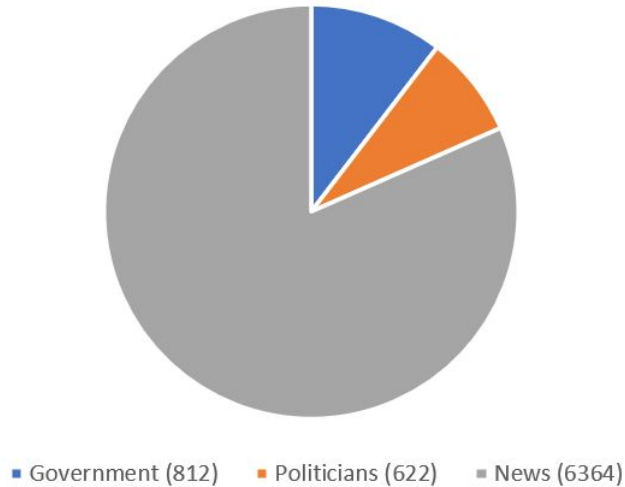
Data

- ❏ `40twene_nl` **corpus** (Caselli and Basile, 2020), a collection of tweets in Dutch about COVID-19 from February to December 2020.

  - ❏ **4.1 million tweets** between **March and September 2020**

- ❏ Messages were *filtered* and gathered in *three categories;* (1) news media, (2) politicians and (3) government institutions.

  - ❏ **News Media**: *De Telegraaf*, *Algemeen Dagblad*, *NRC*, and *Volkskrant*, *NOS*, *Één vandaag*, and *NPO1*

  - ❏ **Politicians**: party leaders and '*fractie voorzitters*' [parliamentary leaders] (both ruling coalition parties and opposition)

  - ❏ **Government Institutions**: RIVM (National Institute for Public Health and Environment), The Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK), The Ministry of Health, the Rijksoverheid, the GGD and GHOR (public health services), and NCTV (National Coordinator of Terrorism and Security)
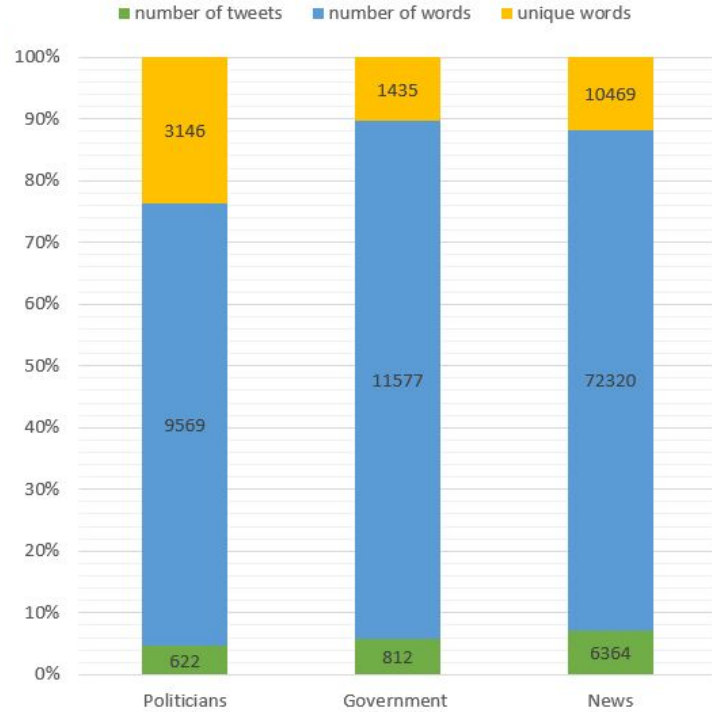
Methodology

❏ The quantitative analysis has been conducted using *Voyant.*

   ❏ *word-trees* to keywords in combination with the *Trends* graph.

❏ The data extracted from *Voyant* are the basis for the qualitative analysis of the *discourse* and themes in **each group (and relevant subgroups).**

❏ Data are further refined by applying a qualitative analysis grounded on Critical Discourse Analysis
(CDA; Catalano and Waugh, 2020; Van Dijk, 2014; Fairclough 2013)

Data

7,798 tweets in sample

Government (812)   Politicians (622)   News (6364)

Composition of the data

number of tweets   number of words   unique words

	Politicians	Government	News
unique words	3146	1435	10469
number of words	9569	11577	72320
number of tweets	622	812	6364

Analysis: Politicians

❏ Politicians have mostly used Twitter to communicate their standpoints regarding the pandemic

    ❏ Likely due to the fragile position of the government due to 'toeslagen affaire'

    ❏ The elections were coming up → politicians wanted to strengthen their position

❏ Twitter was also used by politicians to express critique on certain aspects of the crisis response

Thierry Baudet ✔
@thierrybaudet

Wij zijn tégen de #Coronaregels en vóór vrijheid. Maar het is onacceptabele arrogantie vd macht dat Halsema en Grapperhaus, die vóór strenge regels zijn en zelfs boetes uitdelen tegen mensen die samenkomen, hun éigen demo's en feestjes wél laten doorgaan.

Translate Tweet

Jesse Klaver ✔ @jesseklaver · Aug 26, 2020

Nu de economische crisis zwaarder wordt, moeten we de inkomensondersteuning niet afbouwen maar juist uitbreiden.

Daarom komen wij met een plan: het crisisinkomen. Iedereen die z'n inkomen verliest als gevolg van de coronacrisis krijgt een inkomen van de overheid.

> ❯ **NRC** ✔ @nrc · Aug 26, 2020
>
> Terwijl het kabinet zint op versobering van de coronasteunmaatregelen komt GroenLinks-leider Klaver met een alternatief voorstel: het crisisinkomen. Daarvoor zou tenminste 1 miljard euro moeten worden vrijgemaakt. nrc.nl/nieuws/2020/08…

Analysis: Government institutions

alleen samen krijgen we corona onder controle

❏ The launch of the 'alleen samen' [only together] campaign

❏ End of April 2020: the government published the first communication
strategy booklet ('handreiking')

❏ A clear narrative or communication strategy was lacking

→ weak and sometimes even contradictory information flows

Ministerie van VWS ✔ @MinVWS · Mar 27, 2020

In Nederland zal de (huis)arts bepalen of iemand met klachten getest moet worden. Denk aan personen in risicogroepen, waarbij het voor de juiste behandeling belangrijk is om zeker te weten of ze COVID-19 hebben. De arts volgt hierin de RIVM richtlijn. ^CV

GGD GHOR Nederland
@GGDGHORNL

De vraag naar coronatests blijft stijgen. De beschikbare testcapaciteit komt onder druk en de wachttijden lopen op. Laat je daarom alleen testen bij klachten. #samentegencorona #alleensamen #coronatest
Translate Tweet

Ministerie van VWS ✔ @MinVWS · Sep 2, 2020

Heb je klachten als neusverkoudheid, hoesten en/of verhoging? Laat je testen op het #coronavirus en blijf thuis tot je de uitslag hebt ontvangen.

Bel 0800-1202 voor een testafspraak of ga naar Rijksoverheid.nl /coronatest

Zo voorkom je de verspreiding van #coronavirus.

Analysis: News media

❏ Mainly News media contributed to situational awareness about COVID-19 in the Netherlands as well as in other European countries

❏ "update-and-compare" activity contributed to an information overflow that sometimes challenged the government discourse

❏ A peculiar use of Twitter by news outlets was to redirect readers to the paywalled website of the news outlet themselves.

→ *activate and intrigue* people

→ resulted in sometimes even *sensationalistic messages*.

AD.nl ✓ @ADnl · Sep 6, 2020
De hele wereld zucht onder Covid-19, maar in het land waar het virus ontstond, is alles weer normaal. De Chinese economie draait als vanouds en er wordt massaal gefeest - (Premium)

ad.nl
Hele wereld zucht onder corona, maar in land waar…
De hele wereld zucht onder Covid-19, maar in het land waar het virus ontstond, is alles weer normaal…

NOS ✓ @NOS · Sep 2, 2020
Nieuwe **foto's** opgedoken van **Grapperhaus** die coronaregels overtreedt

nos.nl
Nieuwe foto's van Grapperhaus die coronaregels overtreedt
De minister is sinds vorige week donderdag in opspraak, toen er beelden in de media kwamen van zijn bruiloft.

NOS @NOS
Experts: Nederlands coronabeleid is goed, lockdown zou onzin zijn
Translate Tweet

nos.nl
Experts: Nederlands coronabeleid is goed, lockdown zou onzin zijn
Het huidige overheidbeleid in strijd tegen het coronavirus is niet bewezen. Toch wordt deze werkwijze door experts als de beste gezien. Een alternatief is er niet.
6:30 PM · Mar 17, 2020 · NOS

Results

- ❏ Lack of a coherent and consistent strategy within but also between categories

- ❏ two-way communication could be beneficial → mostly used in a one-way communication setting to redirect users (either paid articles or external web pages where information is given)
  - ❏ Only the politicians have used Twitter as a tool for dialogue, mainly with their supporters

- ❏ All three actors have competing goals for using Twitter rather than solely to achieve mitigation of the crisis

*Actors can use Twitter **freely and democratically** to express themselves, but it is important to be aware of the **influence** and **interactions** among these actors and the weight that each voice has on social media platforms, in order **to adapt the response accordingly***

Limitations and further research

❏ Further research focusing on how Twitter can be used for dialogical methods of crisis communication and management is recommended

❏ There is a need to gain a better understanding of how contemporary communication tools such as Social Media are used in times of a crisis

→ While the responsibility to address this might lie within academia, this knowledge also needs to be communicated to those who need to apply it: news media, politicians, and government institutions.

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