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HOW TO DO THINGS WITH “VALUES”: A CROSS-LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE MEANINGS AND FUNCTIONS OF A CORE CONCEPT ON TWITTER

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The term *values* is prominent in political discourse. Yet its ubiquity is matched by its vagueness, especially when considering usage among different cultures. Twitter provides a promising venue for exploring the contested political discourse surrounding this term.

In this paper, we study the use of the term *values* on Twitter across different language communities. We ask: what **meanings** do users ascribe to the term “*values*”? and *what are the social and political discursive functions of the term?* For both questions, we will explore cross-cultural similarities and differences.

We compiled a corpus of around 15 million tweets containing the term *values* from 2019-2021 in English, German, Italian, Japanese and Korean. We use two computational tools to analyze the data: 1) Co-occurrence network analysis at the tweet level, 2) Phrase-detection – using the Pointwise Mutual Information measure (PMI) – of word combinations containing *values*. Both quantitative tools are complemented by qualitative analysis of full tweets containing key terms and phrases.

Preliminary results suggest fundamental differences in how different cultures perceive and frame *values*: while the term in English, Italian, and German appears mainly in a partisan political context, Japanese and Korean usage is far more interpersonal and apolitical. In the English, Italian, and German corpuses, the term is often invoked in politically motivated rhetorical attacks, often alleging hypocrisy. In the Japanese and Korean corpuses, tweeters use the term to promote a societal norm of respecting others’ values and to discuss generational gaps.

Our analysis demonstrates the potential of Twitter-based research for unpacking the meanings and functions of this core concept, across cultures.