

Opposition in times of crisis: COVID-19 in parliamentary debates

Tom Louwerse^{a*}, Ulrich Sieberer^b, Or Tuttnauer^c and Rudy B. Andeweg^a

^aInstitute of Political Science, Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands; ^bDepartment of Political Science, University of Bamberg, Bamberg, Germany; ^cMannheimer Zentrum für Europäische Sozialforschung, Universität Mannheim, Mannheim, Germany

Online Appendices

Appendix A: List of debates included in the analysis

We outline the selection of debates in each country below. As the four parliaments discussed COVID-19 related issues in somewhat different ways, we allowed for some variation between countries as to what type of debates were included. We generally preferred more general debates on the government's COVID-19 response to very specific debates, but these did not take place regularly in all countries. Overall, the debate selection for Germany and The Netherlands focuses mostly on these general debates, while for Israel and the United Kingdom, we include a number of more specific debates as well to arrive at an encompassing picture of opposition expressed sentiment in all four countries.

For the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom we also coded one major pre-COVID-19 debate in order to establish a baseline for comparison. We selected the major political debate that was held before the COVID-19 crisis started, such as the debate held after the Queen's/King's speech (UK/NL) and the general debate on the Chancellor's budget (Germany). In Israel it was not possible to establish a meaningful baseline, as elections were held early March 2020 and the composition of government and opposition changed.

Germany

In a first sweep, we identified all general debates on the COVID-19 pandemic in the Bundestag until summer recess on July 3 that were not tied to specific pieces of legislation (numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 in the list below). These debates focused on the general approach of the government towards handling the crisis rather than on technical details.

In a second sweep, we added two debates on supplementary budgets that are a direct response to the immediate financial implications of the crisis (numbers 4 and 7). These debates were still on a rather general level and allow general conclusions on opposition sentiment towards the government. In addition, the Bundestag held many debates on specific pieces of legislation that dealt in one way or another with the pandemic and its consequences. However, many of these debates was less concerned with government policy in general but often focused on specific and technical issues of the legislative proposal.

Date	Debate Title
12/02/2020	Topical Debate (<i>Aktuelle Stunde</i>): Prevention strategy for the coronavirus in Germany
04/03/2020	Government declaration (<i>Regierungserklärung</i>) delivered by Minister of Health Jens Spahn: Combatting the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2) in Germany
25/03/2020	Agreed debate (<i>Vereinbarte Debatte</i>): Handling of the corona crisis ¹
25/03/2020	Debate on the first supplementary budget
23/04/2020	Government declaration (<i>Regierungserklärung</i>) delivered by Chancellor Angela Merkel: Handling of the corona crisis in Germany and Europe
27/05/2020	Topical debate (<i>Aktuelle Stunde</i>): Supporting economic recovery after the corona crisis on all levels of the state
02/06/2020	Debate on the second supplementary budget

¹ Typically, this would have been a government declaration delivered by the Chancellor.

However, Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) was in domestic quarantine at the time because she had had contact with an infected person a few days before. Instead, Vice Chancellor and Minister of Finance Olaf Scholz (SPD) delivered a general speech on behalf of the government.

The pre-COVID-19 debate we coded for comparison, was:

Date	Debate Title
11/09/2020	Debate on the Budget 2020: Section of the Chancellor and the Chancellor's Office

Israel

Debates were selected that included the word “corona” (קורונה) in their title, including bills, motions to the agenda and motions of no-confidence. Additionally, debates were selected if the subject of the bill or motion to the agenda was clearly due to the pandemic (e.g. a special amendment to the Basic Law: State economy). One-minute speeches by relevant opposition members speaking about the pandemic were included between March 17th and April 1st – a period in which no substantive debates were held in the Knesset following the March 2nd elections. Finally, five debates in which less than three opposition parties participated were dropped.

Date	Debate Title
17/03/2020	One-minute speeches
23/03/2020	One-minute speeches
24/03/2020	One-minute speeches
01/04/2020	One-minute speeches
06/04/2020	Basic Law Bill: State Economy (Temporary Provision for 2020)
06/04/2020	Basic Law Bill: State Economy (Amendment No. 10 and Temporary Provision for 2020)
16/04/2020	Criminal Procedure Bill (Enforcement Powers - Arrests) (Temporary Order - The New Corona Virus) (Suspicious Arrest in Prevention of Promoting Investigation), 5724-2020
16/04/2020	Criminal Procedure Bill (Enforcement Powers - Communications Data) (Temporary Order - The New Corona Virus) (Receipt of Location Data for the Purpose of Supervising Compliance with the Isolation Provisions), 5764-2020
20/04/2020	Cleanliness Bill (Temporary Order - The New Corona Virus Bill) (Grant to Local Authorities), 5742-2020
22/04/2020	Cleanliness Bill (Temporary Order - The New Corona Virus Bill) (Grant to Local Authorities), 5742-2020
30/04/2020	Motions to the agenda: distance learning in schools during the Corona crisis

Date	Debate Title
30/04/2020	Motions to the agenda: immediate need to expand and amend the outline of self-employment assistance
25/05/2020	Local Authorities Bill (Temporary Order - The New Corona Virus) (Holding a Council Meeting in a Visual Committee), 5764-2020
27/05/2020	Motions to the agenda Refund for parents following the cancellation of trips to Poland
27/05/2020	Motions to the agenda The fear of the collapse of businesses in areas where they did not return to activity in accordance with the provisions and the need for an additional grant for the self-employed
27/05/2020	Motions to the agenda to prevent double benefits from the National Insurance Institute for underprivileged populations
27/05/2020	Motions to the agenda Remaining unemployed - unemployed who will not return to work after the corona crisis has passed
27/05/2020	Basic Law Bill: State Economy (Amendment No. 10 and Temporary Provision for 2020) (Amendment)
01/06/2020	Employment Encouragement Grant Bill (Temporary Order - The New Corona Virus), 2020
01/06/2020	Aviation Services Bill (Compensation and assistance due to cancellation or change in its terms) (Temporary Order - The New Corona Virus), 2020
01/06/2020	Basic Law Bill: State Economy (Amendment No. 10 and Temporary Provision for 2020) (Amendment)
03/06/2020	Motions to the agenda One in ten Israelis eats less
03/06/2020	Bill Extending Periods and Postponing Deadlines in Matters of Tax Procedures (Temporary Order - The New Corona Virus), 2020
03/06/2020	Bill to streamline municipal enforcement and supervision in local authorities (Temporary Provision) (Amendment No. 5), 5764-2020
03/06/2020	Bill on Conducting Hearings in Technological Means (Temporary Order - The New Corona Virus) (Judgments in Courts and Courts with the Participation of Detainees, Prisoners and Prisoners), 5724-2020
03/06/2020	Urgent queries - Dealing with the crisis in the fishing industry
15/06/2020	Motion of no-confidence due to the failure to combat the Coronavirus
15/06/2020	Bill to extend the validity of emergency regulations (the new corona virus - enforcement), 2020
15/06/2020	Bill to streamline municipal enforcement and supervision in local authorities (Temporary Provision) (Amendment No. 5), 5764-2020
15/06/2020	Bill to amend the Municipalities Ordinance (Temporary Order) (Amendment No. 5), 5764-2020
15/06/2020	Bill Preventing the entry of visitors and lawyers to places of detention, police stations, prisons, guard rooms and military prisons (Temporary Order), 5724-2020
15/06/2020	Employment Encouragement Grant Bill (Temporary Order - The New Corona Virus), 2020
15/06/2020	Special Powers Bill for Dealing with the New Corona Virus (Temporary Order), 2020
17/06/2020	Motions to the agenda: Non-return of the Israel Railways to routine
17/06/2020	Motions to the agenda: Discrimination and the lack of an outline for summer camps in non-formal educational institutions
17/06/2020	Motions to the agenda: Fear of economic collapse of government and public

Date	Debate Title
	hospitals as a result of loss of revenue during the Corona period
22/06/2020	Bill Extending and Postponing Deadlines (Temporary Order - New Corona Virus) (Regulatory Approvals and Financial Sanctions), 2020
22/06/2020	Bill to extend the validity of Emergency Regulations (New Corona Virus) (Restricted Area), 2020
22/06/2020	Bill to extend the validity of emergency regulations (the new corona virus) (isolation instead of isolation on behalf of the state), 5722-2020
22/06/2020	Bill to extend the validity of emergency regulations (the new Corona virus - restriction of activity), 2020
22/06/2020	Special Adaptation Grant Bill for People Aged 67 and Over (Temporary Order - The New Corona Virus), 2020
22/06/2020	Bill Special powers to deal with the new corona virus (isolation instead of isolation on behalf of the state and administrative closure orders) (Temporary Order), 5722-2020
22/06/2020	Bill on the Absorption of Veterans (Temporary Order - The New Corona Virus) (Implementation of Part of the Deposit for Any Purpose), 5764-2020
24/06/2020	Motions to the agenda - industries that are severely affected in May-July as a result of state directives
24/06/2020	Motions to the agenda - warning the employment service of a significant increase in unemployment, especially among young people, the elderly and minorities in society
24/06/2020	General Security Service Accreditation Bill to Assist in the National Effort to Reduce the Spread of the New Corona Virus (Temporary Order), 2020
29/06/2020	No-confidence motion: Government failure to address Corona
29/06/2020	Proposal of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on the Split of the General Security Service Accreditation Bill to Assist in the National Effort to Reduce the Spread of the New Corona Virus (Temporary Order), 5752-20
29/06/2020	Period Extension Bill (Temporary Order - The New Corona Virus) (Regulatory Approvals), 5764-2020
29/06/2020	National Insurance Bill (Temporary Order - The New Corona Virus) (Special Provisions Regarding Unemployment Insurance), 2020
29/06/2020	Bill to amend and enforce emergency regulations (New Corona virus - enforcement) (Amendment), 5742-2020
29/06/2020	Bill on the Conduct of Discussions of the Release Committees and the Committee for the Examination of Punishment (Temporary Order - The New Corona Virus), 5702
01/07/2020	General Security Service Accreditation Bill to Assist in the National Effort to Reduce the Spread of the New Corona Virus (Temporary Order), 2020
01/07/2020	Bill to amend and extend the validity of Emergency Regulations (New Corona Virus) (Restricted Area), 2020
01/07/2020	Bill to amend and extend the validity of emergency regulations (the new corona virus) (isolation instead of isolation on behalf of the state), 5722-2020
01/07/2020	Real Estate Taxation (Appreciation and Acquisition) Bill (Amendment - Extension of the Period for the Exchange of an Apartment Due to the Corona Crisis), 5764-2020

The Netherlands

Between 5 March and the 2020 summer recess the Dutch lower house (*Tweede Kamer*) discussed the Coronavirus situation in a series of general Coronavirus debates, each entitled ‘the situation regarding the coronavirus’. As these debates were held at regular intervals we selected only those debates, discarding for example a debate on the economic aid package held at the end of May 2020. A committee debate was held on 6 February 2020 well before the first plenary debate. We ultimately decided against including this, as we would not be able to ascertain whether any differences between this committee debate and the other debates were due to the timing or the setting (committee vs. plenary) of the debate.

Date	Debate Title
05/03/2020	Debate on the developments regard the spread of the coronavirus
12/03/2020	Debate on the fight against the coronavirus
18/03/2020	Debate on the current developments regarding the coronavirus
26/03/2020	Debate on the current developments regarding the coronavirus
01/04/2020	Debate on the developments regarding the coronavirus
08/04/2020	Debate on the developments regarding the coronavirus
16/04/2020	Debate on the developments regarding the coronavirus
22/04/2020	Debate on the developments regarding the coronavirus
07/05/2020	Debate on the developments regarding the coronavirus
20/05/2020	Debate on the developments regarding the coronavirus
04/06/2020	Debate on the developments regarding the coronavirus
25/06/2020	Debate on the developments regarding the coronavirus

The pre-COVID-19 debate we coded for comparison, was:

Date	Debate Title
18/09/2020	General political reflections (<i>Algemene Politieke Beschouwingen</i>)

United Kingdom

Using Hansard’s records of debates in the House of Commons made available on the website www.theyworkforyou.com, we identified all debates with either ‘coronavirus’

or ‘covid-19’ in the major heading. There are several hundreds of debates in which these terms occur in MPs’ contributions, but often in a context in which the main focus of the debate was not on the crisis. Most of the 39 selected debates concerned the government’s general handling of the crisis, and not on very specific aspects, but the distinction is not always clear-cut, such as in a debate on the fate of UK nationals held in corona-infected prisons abroad. Most of the debates are either adjournment debates or emergency debates on an urgent question by an MP. Only two debates, both on March 23, dealt with legislation.

Date	Debate Title
23/01/2020	Wuhan Coronavirus
03/02/2020	Wuhan Coronavirus
11/02/2020	Wuhan Coronavirus
26/02/2020	Coronavirus
02/03/2020	British Citizens Imprisoned Overseas and Coronavirus
03/03/2020	Coronavirus
09/03/2020	Coronavirus
11/03/2020	Coronavirus
16/03/2020	COVID-19
17/03/2020	COVID-19
19/03/2020	Coronavirus: Employment Support
23/03/2020	Coronavirus Bill
24/03/2020	COVID-19 Update
22/04/2020	COVID-19 Response
29/04/2020	COVID-19: Repatriation of UK Nationals
04/05/2020	COVID-19: DWP Update
05/05/2020	COVID-19 Update
06/05/2020	COVID-19: International Response
11/05/2020	COVID-19: Strategy
11/05/2020	COVID-19
12/05/2020	COVID-19: Economic Package
12/05/2020	COVID-19: Business
12/05/2020	COVID-19: Transport
12/05/2020	COVID-19
13/05/2020	COVID-19: School Reopening
13/05/2020	COVID-19: Housing Market
18/05/2020	COVID-19 Response
19/05/2020	Coronavirus and Care Homes

Date	Debate Title
02/06/2020	COVID-19 Response
03/06/2020	COVID-19: Aviation
03/06/2020	COVID-19: UK Border Health Measures
04/06/2020	Public Health England Review: COVID-19 Disparities
08/06/2020	COVID-19: R Rate and Lockdown Measures
17/06/2020	Coronavirus
17/06/2020	COVID-19: Asylum Seeker Services in Glasgow
18/06/2020	COVID-19: BAME Communities
23/06/2020	COVID-19 Update
25/06/2020	COVID-19: Support for UK Industries

The pre-COVID-19 debate we coded for comparison, was:

Date	Debate Title
19/12/2020	Debate on the Address

Appendix B: Coding instructions for Opposition Party Expressed Sentiment Scale

The scale consists of 5 categories: High/moderate negativity, neutral, and moderate/high positivity.

The unit of analysis is a speech act, a section of the text dedicated to one topic/message. This will normally, but not always, be a single paragraph in a parliamentary speech. If need be, paragraphs can be split into distinct speech acts. Interruptions – in parliaments in which they occur and are documented – may also constitute a speech act.

We code in two steps:

- Step 1: Decide whether a statement is negative, neutral, positive or cannot be coded on the oppositional attitude scale (missing).
- Step 2: When a statement is negative or positive, decide whether it is highly or moderately so. This we regard as a difference in intensity of the remark.

Negative

Negative statements meet one of the below descriptions:

- (1) Is the speaker critiquing a specific measure or the government's policy agenda as a whole? e.g. "Lockdown is a mistake" / "small businesses are left behind"
- (2) Is the speaker promising to handle the situation, insinuating they will do better than the government?
- (3) Is the speaker calling for a government action that (s)he argues is not currently taken by the government? (the call for action implies a critique on current policies/measures)

- (4) The speaker expresses regret for the government not taking up an opposition proposal/suggestion.

Code as high negativity (-2) if the speaker goes beyond what is deemed normal criticism of the government, for example by using blunt, severe language, offering a sweeping critique of government policy, criticizing the minister personally, or asking for a resignation of a minister/the government as a whole.

Code as moderate negativity (-1) if the speaker offers what is deemed normal criticism of the government.

Neutral

The following type of statements are coded as neutral (0):

- (1) Is the speaker mentioning government policies/actions/measures or asking questions/making suggestions without any obvious judgement or negative/positive sentiment vis-à-vis the government?
- (2) Is the speaker asking the government for information about a particular policy/situation (without implying criticism or support for the government)?

[Note: compare to coding as missing]

Positive

Positive statements meet one of the below descriptions:

- (1) Is the speaker offering support for government actions/policies? e.g. “we will support any correct measures by the government”
- (2) Is the speaker calling citizens to abide by government guidelines?

- (3) Is the speaker promising/stating cooperation with the government on a specific action? e.g. voting for a specific government bill
- (4) Is the speaker acknowledging that the government has included an opposition proposal in their policies?
- (5) Is the speaker calling government parties to join an emergency government?

Code as high positivity (+2) if the speaker not only mentions the government's policies or actions in a positive way, but does so in a clearly very positive way (beyond what is deemed normal) and/or clearly credits the government for their actions.

Code as moderate positivity (+1) otherwise. Remarks in this category will normally mention support for government action, but not clear praise (or rather stress the role of their own party in bringing about cooperation between government and opposition).

Missing (Not Applicable/NA)

In general we code statements that (implicitly or explicitly) relate to policies or actions of the government/government ministers/government parties. Other statements should be coded as missing (NA), for example:

- (1) Any technical language/point of order ('my microphone is not on').
- (2) Is the speaker giving a statement without connection to government policies/measures/ action? e.g. "we will get through this", "I admire the health workers"
- (3) Is the speaker addressing other opposition parties' policy positions (not the government's) and does this message not clearly imply critique on or support for the government's policies?

- (4) Does the speaker mention general policy positions or future policy goals that do not clearly relate to the topic of the debate and/or government policy? (i.e. talking about the need for a ‘green economic recovery’ after the COVID-19 crisis).
- (5) When in doubt about whether a statement relates to government policy/action, code as missing.

Examples of coded paragraphs

Note: These paragraphs have been translated from the original language by the authors.

Code	Country	Example of coded paragraph
-2	NL	It is too little and it is too late. For weeks, this cabinet underestimated the coronavirus. While countries around us intervened hard, the problems in the Netherlands were denied. For weeks, the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) has been crying out for decisiveness, but apart from measures in Brabant, the government only came up with a recommendation not to shake hands. There was hardly any intervention, because the problems were denied and trivialised. Minister Bruins said in January of this year that the chances of the virus crossing from Asia to Europe were slim. And Minister Bruins wrote to the House in a letter on 25 February that he considered the chance of the virus manifesting itself in the Netherlands small. He was completely wrong. What a blunder!
-2	UK	I am sorry but the Minister is talking absolute crap!
-2	GER	Finally restore the constitutional order in this country and give their freedom back to the people!
-2	ISR	People have no money to go to the grocery store, what exactly are you doing, what do you want to achieve? You have increased the fines because you are hard of heart and have no God. Shame on you.
-1	NL	At the same time, I would like to say to my fellow Members that, at this stage too, communication is very important. There is still a long way to go in explaining the reasons why, the background to the measures, but also in terms of content - you immediately saw all kinds of questions arise in all kinds of areas.
-1	UK	It is now six and a half weeks since the first cases of coronavirus were reported in the UK. For over a month we have known about the substantial risk that coronavirus poses to the economy and to workers, yet the Government have announced no plan to protect jobs and wages - no full plan for employment support. We are all -all of us- inundated with so many questions, and I have just four of those questions to ask.
-1	GER	The federal government has done too little and does too little to

Code	Country	Example of coded paragraph
		counter this scaremongering by the media.
-1	ISR	Therefore, Mr. Chairman, we will oppose this law in principle and in substance, we will oppose it because it does not give an adequate answer to the issue we are discussing today.
0	NL	And, finally. In your letter, you write that 30 million mouth caps have been ordered. Is this enough? Approximately how many mouth caps are needed per day in healthcare? Ideally, how many should also be available outside of the health care sector?
0	UK	In answering my right hon. Friend the Member for Leeds Central (Hilary Benn) earlier, the Secretary of State made it clear that he wanted everybody to be tested at home if they had the symptoms. What is the difference between the number of new cases currently and the number of tests that are currently available per day?
0	GER	Now is the hour of the state. We need the state in everything that goes beyond the individual's ability to take responsibility. This is exactly the situation in which we find ourselves now where we have to use the state's capabilities to use all the funds it has at its disposal.
0	ISR	I suggest you, Honourable Deputy Minister, to meet the members of the Joint List within a day or two so that we can present to you all these things -- in order to move forward in a comprehensive way.
1	NL	It is nice to hear that the VVD is also moving a little towards the fact that it is very important to be able to impose conditions.
1	UK	The right hon. Lady is making a fine speech. I welcome the support that the Government have put in.
1	GER	I want to compliment the Minister of Health for not leaving out the critical points and for naming the weaknesses.
1	ISR	At this time, increasing the deficit is a necessity, and of course we support it – here you go, Mr. Deputy Minister.
2	NL	All the more reason to thank all those who - Jesse Klaver said that, rightly so, sometimes work with personal courage and take risks to protect us. My thanks also go to the people in section K [government seating area in parliament] who are fighting the crisis. In this case, I would like to mention Bruno Bruins, who had to resign because he collapsed under the burden of the crisis.
2	UK	I will not be moving my amendment, but instead thank the Government for their amendment, which actually strengthened my proposal. However, it is still important to say a few words about that. I have been truly heartened by the cross-party support that I have received in this process from every part of this House. It really does demonstrate how, at times of crisis, democracy can work and can respond positively to the concerns out there in the community. I would like to say thank you for that spirit of unity.
2	GER	In these times, government and opposition bear a joint responsibility for the state. Those who hold the opposition role in the German Bundestag also bear executive responsibility on the subnational and local level. This is why we had intense consultations. I explicitly want to thank the Federal Government and the party groups supporting it for the constructive atmosphere, in which we have discussed the issues that are to be decided today.

Code	Country	Example of coded paragraph
2	ISR	It succeeded in part because of your participation and your arrival [Honourable Minister]. It is important for to be known that when a minister comes to the committee, it is easier to coordinate legislation. I think your presence, on a personal level, has been very helpful.

Appendix C: Inter-coder reliability tests

The coding scale requires coders to evaluate statements, rather than purely factual information. It is not always straightforward to distinguish between very and moderately negative statements, nor is it always clear whether a question to a minister implies a criticism or truly represents a demand for information. Therefore, one of the authors and a student assistant double coded at least one debate in each country. We performed one or two test rounds in each country, after which we discussed coding differences and clarified coding instructions. In final inter-coder reliability tests, we obtained values of Krippendorff's alpha (interval) of 0.84 (Netherlands, $N_{\text{coding units}} = 197$), 0.81 (United Kingdom, $N_{\text{coding units}} = 469$), 0.77 (Israel, $N_{\text{coding units}} = 159$) and 0.87 (Germany, $N_{\text{coding units}} = 157$). When we calculate the parties' mean scale position in a debate and correlate these scores between coders, we obtain a Pearson's correlation of 0.93 (Netherlands), 0.88 (United Kingdom), 0.94 (Israel) and 0.94 (Germany), which shows that coding differences between individual coders on the paragraph level nevertheless results in highly correlated estimates of party positions in debates.

Appendix D: Descriptive statistics

Table A.1: Country-level descriptive statistics about coded speeches

Country	Debates	Total speech acts	Total speech acts coded -2 to +2	Unique speakers
Germany	7	824	327	26
Israel	56	979	652	48
Netherlands	12	3151	2157	20
United Kingdom	38	1384	1106	133

Table A.2: Party level descriptive statistics about coded speeches

Country	Party	Mean number of words spoken per day
Germany	FDP	1331
	Greens	1389
	Left	1200
	AfD	1599
Israel	Blue-White	358
	Israel Our Home	1698
	Labor	598
	Meretz	731
	Joint List	1337
	Yesh Atid	1337
	Yemina	2262
	50 PLUS	1126
The Netherlands	DENK	1682
	Forum for Democracy	1852
	GroenLinks (GreenLeft)	3063
	PvdA (Labour Party)	2689
	PvdD (Party for the Animals)	2465
	PVV	4383
	SGP	1521
	SP	3221
	DUP	265
	Labour	2214
United Kingdom	Liberal Democrat	431
	Plaid Cymru	136
	Scottish National Party	994

Note: Mean number of words spoken in COVID-19 debates on a particular day and the party was represented in parliament.

Appendix E: Additional regression analyses

Models 1 and 2 in Table A.3 include populism as a scale and binary classification respectively. The scale variable is derived from Norris (2019) and the binary classification is based on the Popu-List (Rooduijn et al., 2019); for Israel we classified Israel Our Home as populist. We find a significant negative coefficient for the binary populism variable (Model 2): these parties are expected to score -0.294 points lower than non-populist parties (*ceteris paribus*).

Models 3 to 5 add the measures of crisis severity separately to assess whether their correlation affects the findings. This is not substantially the case: we only find a significant effect for ‘daily deaths’ that is not significant in model 2 in the main analysis. As with the stringency index, the relationship is negative: more deaths are related to more negative opposition party sentiment, which we relate to the timing: the death toll was relatively low very early in the crisis (when sentiment was positive), but while sentiment started to turn negative, the death toll remained at relatively high levels in May/June.

Table A.4 presents the results of a multilevel regression analysis. Here the unit of analysis is one coded speech act (paragraph). We include speaker and party as random intercepts. We include two speech act-level covariates: a dummy variable for whether a speech act is an interruption as well as the length of the speech act in words (both are statistically significant). We report the model without the country fixed effects here, because this variation is already picked up by the party random intercepts and a model that does include these country dummy variables performs worse: the country dummies are not significant, a likelihood ratio test shows no significant improvement and the AIC and BIC are worse. The findings on the independent variables of interests are not substantively different from those reported in the main analysis. We also ran an

ordinal logistic model with the same specification (not reported), which provided very similar findings.

Table A.3: Additional regression models

	(1) Populism scale	(2) Populism binary	(3) Daily cases	(4) Daily deaths	(5) Stringency
Date	-0.255*** (0.050)	-0.238*** (0.047)			
Date^2	0.009 (0.037)	0.001 (0.037)			
Daily cases / 1mil	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)	-0.001 (0.001)		
Daily deaths / 1mil	0.001 (0.004)	0.001 (0.004)		-0.007** (0.003)	
Policy stringency	0.001 (0.002)	0.001 (0.002)			-0.004*** (0.001)
Ideological distance	-0.036 (0.031)	-0.039 (0.025)			
Populism scale	-0.013 (0.022)				
Populism binary		-0.294*** (0.068)			
Office experience	-0.023 (0.017)	-0.015 (0.010)			
Party size	-0.039*** (0.013)	-0.028*** (0.008)			
Experience * Size	0.003** (0.001)	0.002*** (0.001)			
Country (Ref. = Netherlands)					
Germany	0.272** (0.130)	0.315** (0.132)	0.165 (0.181)	0.171 (0.179)	0.103 (0.180)
United Kingdom	0.207 (0.126)	0.179* (0.101)	0.293** (0.120)	0.368*** (0.123)	0.236* (0.122)
Israel	0.151 (0.113)	0.099 (0.068)	-0.083 (0.116)	-0.091 (0.117)	-0.017 (0.119)
Constant	-0.255 (0.289)	-0.296* (0.170)	-0.553*** (0.108)	-0.563*** (0.096)	-0.290** (0.134)
Observations	292	328	328	328	328
R-squared	0.309	0.325	0.082	0.092	0.114

Robust standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table A.4: Multilevel regression model of opposition party expressed sentiment

	(1) Full model
Interruption = 1	-0.185** (0.031)
N words	-0.003** (0.000)
Date	-0.166** (0.017)
Date^2	-0.012 (0.019)
Daily cases / 1mil	0.001 (0.001)
Daily deaths / 1mil	0.001 (0.002)
Policy stringency	-0.000 (0.001)
Ideological distance	-0.056† (0.033)
Office experience	-0.016 (0.012)
Party size	-0.030* (0.012)
Experience * Size	0.003** (0.001)
Constant	0.104 (0.142)
Observations	4,279
Log likelihood	-4732.209
AIC	9494.417
BIC	9589.84
Number of parties	25
Number of speakers	225
Random effects variance: party (estimate / std. err.)	0.029 / 0.015
Random effects variance: speaker (estimate / std. err.)	0.054 / 0.012
Random effects variance: residual (estimate / std. err.)	0.512 / .011
Residual intraclass correlation: party (ICC / std. err.)	0.048 / 0.025
Residual intraclass correlation: speaker party (ICC / std. err.)	0.138 / 0.025

Standard errors in parentheses

** p<0.01, * p<0.05, † p<0.1