“GERMANY FOR GERMANS:” Examining the social media use of two major political parties in Germany
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METHODS
Data Sources
- AfD and CDU Twitter and Facebook posts
Data Analysis
- Posts from December 1, 2016-March 20, 2017 coded for relevant categories
- Categories emerged through repeated, systematic observation and analysis of data as it was coded (grounded theory)

CONTENT
- Crime, safety: Major focus of both parties
- CDU: solidarity with/recognition of crimes, highlights safety-oriented policies (current and proposed)
- AfD: critiques CDU government for not protecting “Germans;” crime is increasing

IMAGES
- Both parties’ images mostly of people; CDU posts candid images of their officials and people at CDU events
- AfD: images communicate their idea of who a “typical German” is to contrast with “foreigners,” migrants

CONCLUSIONS
AfD:
- Communicates ideologically informed notions of who is “German” via use of imagery and exclamatory rhetoric
CDU:
- Focuses more on the party’s successes, results

Christliche Demokratische Union (CDU)
- Established, center-right party in power
- Traditional conservatism
- New focus on security and immigration
- Historically popular, but losing some support

Alternative für Deutschland
- Newer right-wing populist party
- Anti European Union → Anti immigration
- Supports traditional families and values, closed borders and direct democracy
- Rapidly gaining support

Social Media & Language Use
- Social media increasingly popular for political entities; used to reach base and public
- Facebook most popular social media platform in Germany
- Twitter less popular, favorite of politicians
- Use of language, punctuation, emoji all part of communicative repertoire; social action

RESEARCH QUESTION
- How do the CDU and AfD use social media to communicate with their followers?