

# nerghes\_2019\_narratives\_of\_the\_refugee\_crisis\_a\_comparative\_study\_of\_mainstream\_media\_and\_twitter

## Year

2019

## Author(s)

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## Title

Narratives of the Refugee Crisis: A Comparative Study of Mainstream-Media and Twitter

## Venue

Media and Communication

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## Topic labeling

Manual

## Focus

Secondary

## Type of contribution

Established approach

## Underlying technique

Manual labeling assisted by associated documents

## Topic labeling parameters

Nr of inspected terms: 10

## Label generation

We report the top 10 most-relevant words for each topic. Relevant words are computed as

$$r(w, k | \lambda) = \lambda \log \log(\phi_{kw}) + (1 - \lambda) \log \log \left( \frac{\phi_{kw}}{p_w} \right)$$

where  $\phi_{kw}$  is a word  $w$  proportion within a given topic  $k$  and  $p_w$  is the word's overall proportion in the corpus ( $\lambda = 0.4$  is used)

We assign a label for each topic based on a qualitative inspection of each topic's words (topic members) and the news articles or tweets strongly associated with the topics.

Topics are labeled through qualitative interpretation of their member words and consultation with the source text.

**Table 1.** Topic modeling for the newspaper data.

ID	Label	Weight	Topic Members
1	Refugee Crisis	0.116	refugee europe country asylum war people flee million syrians crisis
2	General Discourse	0.115	history political policy world idea prove fact mind wrong hard
3	United Kingdom	0.102	cameron britain uk refugee scheme scotland accept moral crisis leader
4	Hungarian Border	0.085	station budapest hungary police austria hungarian migrant railway border camp
5	Kurdi Family	0.065	kurdi abdullah boat bodrum brother turkey aylan body capsized rehan
6	Refugee Quotas	0.065	eu urban schengen italy germany quota france migrant slovakia hungary
7	Travel	0.056	hotel book flight shop room festival restaurant museum park driver
8	Viral Aylan	0.049	image child aylan beach shocking dead wash toddler death tweet
9	Football Club Donations	0.044	club donation calais charity football bayern celtic volunteer support raise
10	Israel-Palestine	0.039	israel idp gaza unicef palestinian israeli displacement borno jerusalem development
11	China Economy	0.037	market china chinese worker investment growth trade investor bank economy
12	Canada—Kurdi Family	0.031	canada aylan sponsor ottawa toronto sponsorship lifeline trudeau quebec citizenship
13	Middle East Situation	0.031	assad military isil syria iraq arab strike troops islamic militant
14	UK Politics	0.031	corbyn vote labour referendum party election voter key contest candidate
15	Baltic affairs	0.030	russia putin ukraine moscow vladivostok kurdistan report forum kiev rossiya
16	Australia	0.030	australia dutton law fairfax offence citizenship court detention sydney jihad
17	Nigeria	0.026	customs enforcement corruption defence nigeria suspect lagos arrest sextortion buhari
18	United States Politics	0.019	trump bush republican clinton american christie mexico reagan presidential iowa

**Table 2.** Topic modeling for the Twitter data.

ID	Label	Weight	Topic Members
1	Refugee Crisis	0.154	europe crisis eu refugeeecrisis refugee migrant politics protection smuggle plight
2	Hungarian Border	0.125	hungary budapest refugee train border marchofhope migrantmarch exodus bicske police
3	Sipila vs. Cameron	0.103	finland home cameron offer house david pm refugee uk sipila
4	Middle East Situation	0.097	middle east syria arab saudi qatar muslim war refugee kuwait
5	Welcoming Refugees	0.094	stand make refugeeswelcome body hospitality messehallen hamburghilft stranger angel cloud
6	Kurdi Family	0.094	kurdi father toronto aylankurdi syrianrefugee humanitywashedashore dead tribute world drown
7	Mobilization of Aid	0.086	donate syrianrefugee human clothes shelter raise kiyiyavuraninsanlik fruit education organize support
8	Refugee Journey	0.084	germany munich applaud conditions arrive greet westbahnhof refugee hellish trainofhope
9	Steve Jobs	0.070	wealthy steve job iphone invent apple accept man migrant syria
10	Call to action	0.048	global join aylan call drown refugeeswelcome demand propagate europe refugee
11	Relating to refugees	0.045	imagine boat worth missing living life die safe danger family

## Motivation

...Less relevant topics to the refugee crisis can then be identified in this manner.

## Topic modeling

LDA

## Topic modeling parameters

Nr of topics: 18. 11

## Nr. of topics

18 (newspaper data), 11 (Twitter data)

## Label

Manually assigned single or multi word labels

## Label selection

## Label quality evaluation

## Assessors

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## Domain

Paper:

Dataset: Social media (Twitter), News

## Problem statement

In this study, the perspectives and narratives of the refugee crisis from the mainstream news and Twitter are compared and contrasted.

Themes are extracted through topic modeling (LDA) and they reveal how news and Twitter converge and also diverge.

We show that in the initial stages of a crisis public discussion on Twitter was highly positive. Unlike the mainstream-media, Twitter offered an alternative and multifaceted narrative, not bound by geo-politics, raising awareness and calling for solidarity and empathy towards those affected. This study demonstrates how mainstream and social media form a new and complementary media space, where narratives are created and transformed.

## Corpus

### **DS1**

Origin: Twitter

Nr. of documents: 369,485

Details:

- News items from major world publications and tweets published between September 3rd 2015 and September 5th 2015 (after the death of death of Aylan Kurdi).
- Tweets containing hashtags: migrantcrisis, migrants, migrant, refugee, refugees, refugeeecrisis, syrianrefugees, syrianrefugeesgr, refugeeswelcome, and muslimrefugees.

## DS2

Origin: LexisNexis

Nr. of documents: 1,935

Details:

- News articles from 89 unique news sources found with keywords: migration issues, immigration, illegal immigration, refugees, displaced persons, and refugee and relief camps.

## Document

The textual content of the newspaper and Twitter data constitutes our corpora.

## Pre-processing

- stop words, numbers, and punctuation were removed
- nouns and verbs were lemmatized and stemmed to their root forms.
- All words were lower-cased.

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