

Reporting on Refugees in Fox News and the New York Times

...

by Tim Martin
March 3rd, 2017

Objectives

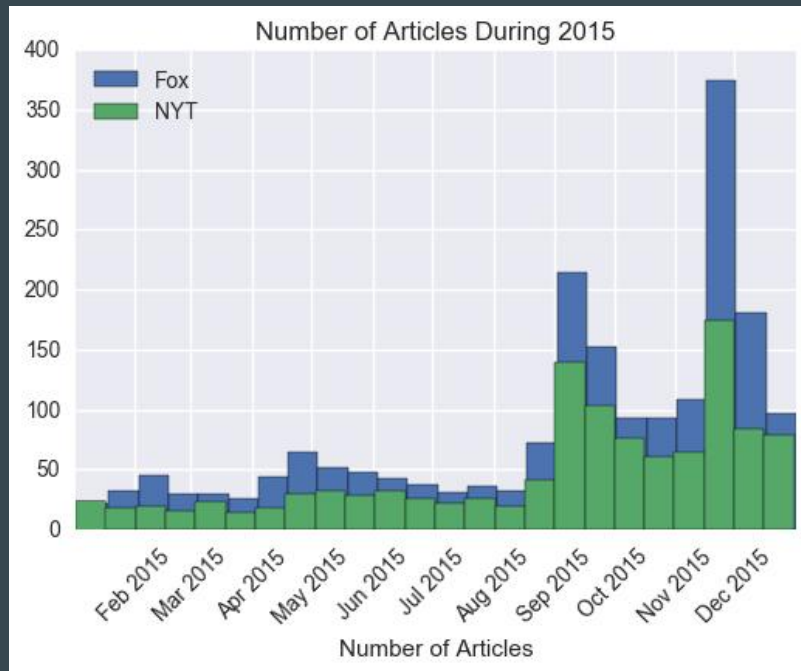
- Compare/contrast the narratives and reporting on refugees in Fox News and the New York Times

Data

- Searched foxnews.com and nytimes.com for articles “refugees” from 2015
- Results: 3,000+ articles, letters, and transcripts
 - ~60% Fox News / 40% NYT
 - ~145,000 words

Tools

- BeautifulSoup
- Newspaper (Python library)
- NYTimes API



Topic Analysis with Non-negative Matrix Factorization

- Convert articles to TF-IDF representation
- NMF with 3 topics

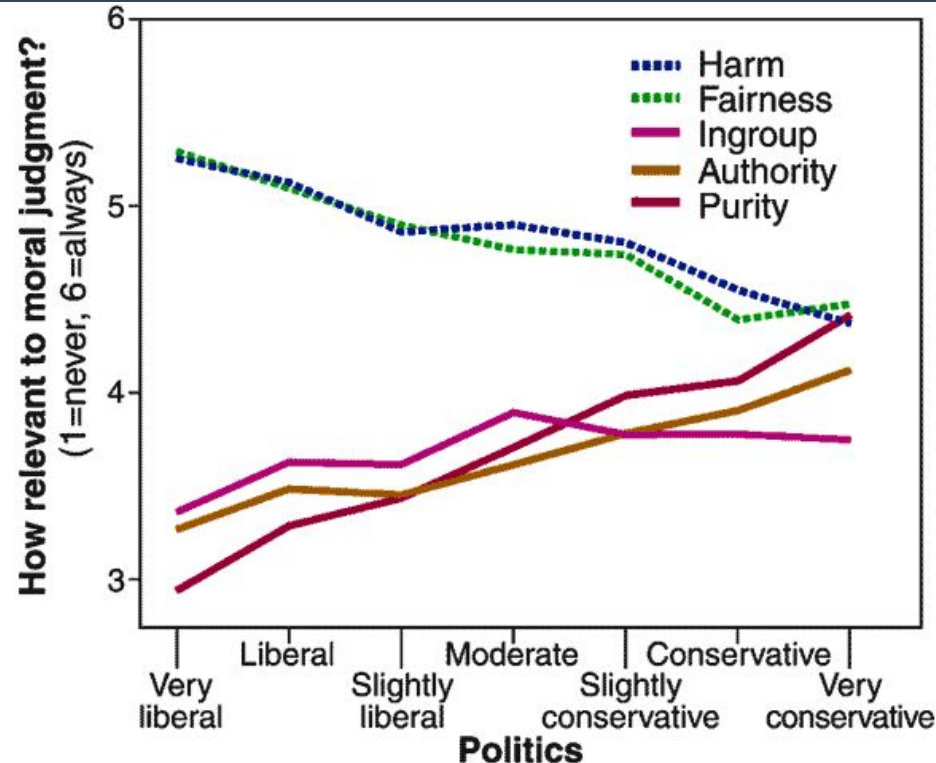
Results: Top Words in each Topic

- Topic 1: migrants, europe, said, germany, hungary, EU, border, asylum, greece, people
- Topic 2: think, trump, know, going, right, ISIS, people, well, president, like
- Topic 3: said, refugees, syrian, mr, state, islamic, obama, security, government, president

A New Angle: Moral Foundations Theory

- By social psychologist Jonathan Haidt (and others)
- 5 (or maybe more) axes of concern that make up our moral intuitions
 - Harm
 - Fairness
 - Ingroup
 - Authority
 - Purity
- Moral Foundations Dictionary is a list of words shown to be relevant to each MF axis

Relevant to Political Ideology? Yes.



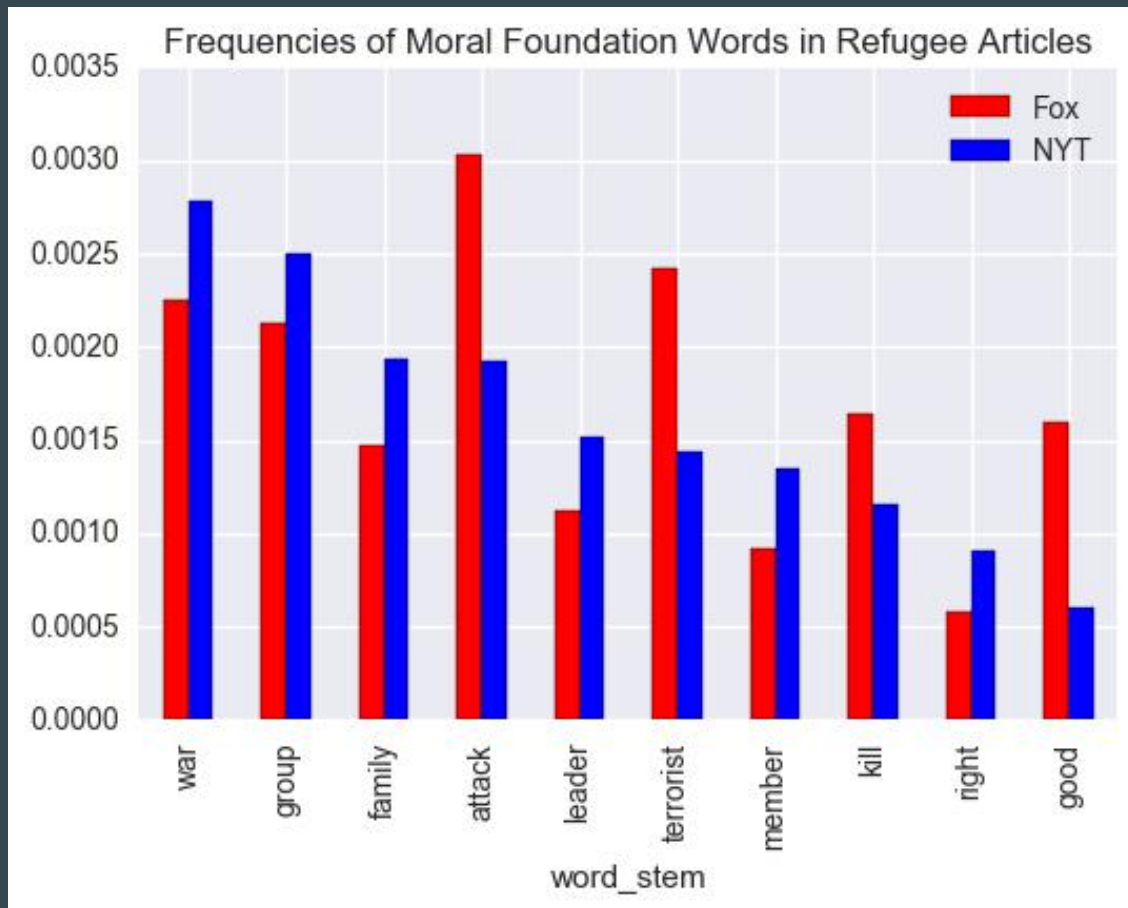
[The New Synthesis in Moral Psychology](#)

Jonathan Haidt, et al.

7651 Science 316, 998 (2007)

Most Common Moral Foundation Word Stems

1. Attack-	Harm
2. War-	Harm
3. Group-	Ingroup
4. Terroris-	Ingroup
5. Security-	Harm
6. Family-	Ingroup
7. Kill-	Harm
8. Fight-	Harm
9. Good-	(General Morality)
10. Leader-	Authority



*All differences are statistically significant at $p < .01$

Conclusions

News Narratives:

- In terms of moral foundations, the refugee discussion in 2015 seemed to focus on harm/security.
- Fox devoted relatively more page ink to talking about *terrorism* and *attacks*.
- NYT devoted relatively more page ink to talking about *wars*, *groups*, *leaders*, and *families*.

Language:

- TF-IDF and NMF seem good at distinguishing conversational language from other styles!

Thank You!