

CHAPTER 4

A humanitarian disaster or invasion of Europe?

2015 migrant crisis in the British press

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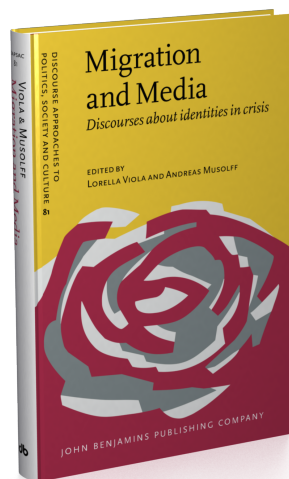
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A humanitarian disaster or invasion of Europe?

2015 migrant crisis in the British press

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This study sought to find out how language resources were employed to reflect the changing media attitude towards immigrants during the 2015 Migrant Crisis. Combining relevant analytical categories of the Socio-Cognitive Approach (Van Dijk 1991), the Discourse-Historical Approach (Wodak 2001) and the Social Actor Analysis (van Leeuwen 2008) with Corpus Linguistic techniques, it compared the British media coverage of two critical cases; the Death of Aylan Kurdi, and the Cologne Sexual Assaults. The findings show that in both cases, regardless of news content, immigration was problematized as a *crisis*, *controversy*, and *catastrophe*. The scale of the tragedy and the possibility of an immigrant influx to the UK deeply influenced the media representation of the immigrants.

Keywords: immigration, British press, media attitude, discourse topics, social actors

1. Introduction

Immigration has always been an area of concern for European society, which is apparent from the rising number of extremist movements like Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes (Pegida), the English Defence League (EDL) besides the increasing popularity of the far right political parties like the UK Independence Party (UKIP), Lega Nord and Front National (see Wodak, KhosraviNik and Mral 2013). However, it has become a much more pressing issue in Europe when the migrant crisis reached its peak in 2015, with a record number of immigrants¹ from war-torn areas like Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan (UNHCR 2016). This moment was historically significant because the crisis had high news

1. The term immigrant was used to refer to migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

value with its recency, negativity, and proximity for the media (Bell 1991). The British media reported on the crisis intensively, which can be seen from the spike in usage of the terms ‘refugee’ and ‘migrant’ in the national newspapers of 2015 (Ruz 2015; Cranz 2016). Mc Cullagh (2002) explained that the media do not just present information about the events and issues but provide interpretative frames for the public to understand the reality in a specific way by means of careful selection and organization of the facts. The way the media represented the 2015 migrant crisis is of great importance because as the “principal institutions of the public sphere” (Curran 1991: 29), the media have immense influence on our understanding of ethnic relations (van Dijk 1987). Fairclough (1989: 54) stated:

The hidden power of media discourse and the capacity of the capitalist class and other power-holders to exercise this power depend on systematic tendencies in news reporting and other media activities. A single text on its own is quite insignificant: the effects of media power are cumulative, working through the repetition of particular ways of handling causality and agency, particular ways of positioning the reader, and so forth.

The media outlets are the main instrument of communicating formulations of ethnic prejudices which are not inherent, but acquired through exposure to predetermined configurations during socialization (van Dijk 1987; Baker et al. 2008). They offer a specific lens on reality through foregrounding or backgrounding certain aspects with the help of careful textual choices (Fowler 1991; Entman 1993). Previous research has shown that the media has had a rather negative stance towards the immigrants by framing them as a threat to the economy, security, national identity and culture (van Dijk 1988; Wodak 2001; Greenslade 2005; Gabrieleitos and Baker 2008; Rydgren 2008). By analysing the British newspapers’ coverage of the two cases from the 2015 migrant crisis, the aim of this study was to examine how language contributed to the framing of the immigrants by the media, which is known to influence readers’ attitudes towards these groups of people (Lido 2006). My work originated from the presumption that the media response to the immigrants differed greatly as both events triggered strikingly conflicting reactions from the public about the status of the immigrants in Europe (Borrud 2016). In terms of Chilton (1987), they were both critical discourse moments, as the first one was concerned with the coverage of the three-year-old Syrian child Aylan Kurdi’s death, while he was trying to cross the Aegean Sea with his family to reach Europe in the search of a better life. The iconic image not only showing his lifeless body on a beach but also epitomizing the hardship of the immigrants was screened 20 million times in only 12 hours and evoked an unmatched response from the public in a way that remarkably changed the debate on immigration (Vis and Goriunova 2015). The second case was about the media coverage of the New Year’s Eve mass sexual

assaults in Cologne, claimed to be committed by the immigrant males that came to Germany after Merkel's announcement of Germany's open-door policy to the refugees. The incident caused hardening of attitudes towards the immigrants in host cultures (Yardley and Wallace 2016). In the timeline of the 2015 migrant crisis, both cases were remarkable as the image of a three year old migrant child's washed up body stirred the conscience of the public about the tragedy of the immigrants, whereas the latter caused alarm about the difficulty of integrating huge numbers of immigrants from different cultures into the settled European societies. The media reporting on these two cases provides a rich database to observe in what ways language resources were exploited by media outlets to cast an attitudinal change towards the immigrants.

The newspapers chosen for the study are *the Sun*, *the Daily Mail*, *the Times* and *the Guardian*. The criteria for selection were the circulation figures, reporting style (quality press vs. popular press) and political affiliations of the newspapers. Only the texts including the search terms and those published within the one month span of each event's occurrence were downloaded from the NexisUK database. As discourse is considered to be an output of the bilateral interaction between ideology and language (Trew 1979), the newspaper coverage of both cases were studied within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) which "primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Van Dijk 2001: 352). My analytical framework draws upon a combination of the analytical categories of the Socio-Cognitive Approach (van Dijk 1991), the Discourse-Historical Approach (henceforth DHA) (Wodak 2001) and the Social Actor Analysis (van Leeuwen 2008) to discover relevant discourse topics besides characteristics, features and qualities attributed to the immigrants. In order to reduce researcher bias and provide more objective results (Baker 2006), the Corpus Linguistic softwares Wmatrix (Rayson 2008) and Wordsmith 6.0 (Scott 2012) were used to analyse the data which was rather big for manual analysis. My research questions were: 1. Which discourse topics were associated with the immigrants in each case? 2. How were the immigrants as social actors constructed and represented linguistically in each case?

This paper has been divided into seven parts. Following this introduction, the second section reviews the major studies on immigration discourse whilst the third section provides information about the analytical framework. The fourth section offers a view on the historical background of the 2015 immigration crisis. The fifth section presents data selection and collection methods. In the Analysis, the corpus was examined with the help of Corpus Linguistic techniques within the CDA framework. Finally, the seventh section presents discussion and concluding remarks.

2. Previous research on immigration discourse

Critical discourse research on immigration has received increasing recognition and importance over the past decades following the rising number of displaced people and increasing hostility towards them in the host cultures. As discourse is “socially shaped, it is also socially shaping, or constitutive” (Fairclough 1995: 132), the CDA adopts a critical stance towards latent ideologies communicated and circulated through carefully structured language units in texts to understand, reveal and resist social inequality (van Dijk 2001). Although there are different approaches and methodologies in the CDA (Weiss and Wodak 2003), it is possible to say that the *us* vs. *them* dichotomy is the exact locus of any sort of textual research on discourse surrounding ethnic relations and immigration. Due to space limitations, only a few studies on the British media and political discourse over immigration could be covered in this section. As a part of the large scale RASIM Project (see Baker et al. 2008), KhosraviNik (2009) investigated representations of the refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants between 1999 and 2006 to compare how media reacted to the immigration in the Balkan Conflict (1999) and the British General Election (2005). Drawing upon the Socio-Cognitive Approach (van Dijk 1991), the DHA (Wodak 2001) and the Social Actor Analysis (van Leeuwen 2008), he examined the topics, topoi, micro-linguistic features and metaphors surrounding them. His findings showed that the distance of these groups of people to the UK and the extent of tragedy involved led to a relatively more positive representation of them as in the media coverage of the Kosovan refugees. However, a more negative stance was observed in the coverage of the political propaganda running up to the 2005 General Elections as they were widely identified with threat, danger, and numbers of an overwhelming mass. Within the RASIM Project, another study was undertaken by Gabrieleitos and Baker (2008) who adopted a corpus based approach to examine the discursive construction of the immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees in a 140 million word corpus. Analysis of the keywords and consistent collocates revealed that these groups of people were generally contextualised within negative semantic fields like terrorism, crime, economic burden, and security concerns through lexical associations like *bogus*, *illegal*, and *alien*. Another diachronic study was carried out by Lamb (2014) who investigated how articulations of race, nationality, and ways of representing the migrants and refugees have led to their marginalisation since the 1960s. Blending the DHA (Wodak 2001) and the Social Actor Analysis (van Leeuwen 2008), it was seen that migrants were appraised in terms of being a burden on social welfare and economic systems, disaster and numbers in all periods. Another striking finding throughout all periods is the text producers’ effort to show themselves as anti-racist while they were campaigning for stricter

regulations. In addition to the denial of racism, the categorization of the immigrants into 'good' and 'bad' was also observed.

Within the framework of Cognitive Linguistics, Charteris-Black (2006) analysed metaphors in the right wing political campaign in the 2005 General Elections in the UK. It was seen that to justify their anti-immigration policies, right-wing politicians employed NATURAL DISASTER and CONTAINER metaphors. Immigration was framed as a destructive flood or tidal wave. While talking about the country, the HOUSE metaphor within the CONTAINER schema was employed. In this way, the necessity to exclude the outsiders to protect the insiders was underlined. From an evolutionary perspective, Hart (2013) examined the cognitive aspects of the argumentation strategies adopted by the British media in their reproduction of discriminatory discourse against the immigrants. By means of the frequent use of the topoi of finance, burden, displacement and abuse, which led to the representation of the immigrants as violators of the social contract and welfare system, the media activated the cheater-detector and avoidance mechanisms. Despite employing different approaches to discourse, research mentioned in this section reveals that there was a consistent negative stance to the immigration in the British media and politics.

3. Methodology

In order to examine the role of language in the changing representations of the immigrants in between the coverage of the death of Aylan Kurdi and the Cologne Sexual Assaults, relevant analytical categories from several CDA approaches were adopted. For the analysis of the discourse topics, the Socio-Cognitive Approach (van Dijk 1991) was adopted as it draws attention to the power elites' manipulation of the discourse topics in communication and circulation of a specific ideology over a contentious issue or a social group. van Dijk (1988: 35) stated that "Topics are crucial in the overall understanding of a text, e.g., in the establishment of global coherence; and they act as a semantic, top-down control on local understanding at the microlevel". They function like frames (see Entman 1993) which highlight, downplay, exaggerate or obscure certain aspects of reality with the help of critical textual choices. As they present an issue in a way "to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman 1993: 52), the strategic control of the flow and circulation of knowledge can be achieved through tightly orchestrated topic formation or selection about a social or political issue in accordance with the dominant ideology (Hall et al. 1980; Tuchman 1978; van Dijk 1987). As semantic macrostructures connected to social cognition, discourse topics channel the encoders to understand and evaluate social

actors and associated actions in a specific way by means of lexical and syntactical choices. Van Dijk's work has shown that they are generally associated with negative discourse topics such as crime, terror, and illegality (van Dijk 1991).

Considering the representation of the immigrants as social actors, a triangulation of the relevant analytical categories of the DHA (Wodak 2001) and the Social Actor Analysis (van Leeuwen 2008) was employed. The DHA advises investigation and evaluation of discourse events with reference to the historical resources and socio-political background. It aims to discover specific discursive strategies used to represent an individual or a group positively or negatively. The five types of discursive strategies, which are *referential* or *nomination*, *predicational*, *argumentation*, *perspectivization* and *intensification*, were offered to discover the formation of identities and justification of inclusionary or exclusionary attitude towards *them*. Only the first two strategies were focussed on in this study as they are more relevant to the Social Actor Analysis. *Referential* or *nomination strategies* are concerned with membership categorization devices such as biological, naturalizing, and depersonalizing metaphors, metonymies and synecdoches. According to Reisigl and Wodak (2001: 47), the way an actor is named "can serve many different psychological, social or political purposes [...] on the side of the speakers or writers". For instance, considering the case of Aylan Kurdi's death, labelling the child as a 'Syrian refugee', 'little angel' or 'economic migrant' has different effects on our understanding of his status. *Predicational strategies* which cannot be separated from *referential* or *nomination strategies* were described as "the very basic process and result of linguistically assigning qualities to people, animals, objects, events, actions and social phenomena" (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 54). They are about positive and negative evaluative attributions and help us identify social actors with reference to quality, quantity, space and time through predicative nouns, adjectives, similes, metaphors and other rhetorical figures.

Van Leeuwen's Social Actor Analysis (2008), which overlaps with these two discursive strategies, is a comprehensive socio-semantic inventory based on social, lexical, and grammatical categories to understand the way social actors are represented in texts. His categorization starts with the distinction between exclusion and inclusion, as text producers may opt to involve or ignore social actors in a way that serves their interests. Due to space limitations and purposes of the study, only the relevant categories of inclusion were explained in the following paragraphs. The first analytical category is activation/passivation which is concerned with the representation of the social actors as the dynamic, active agents or passive recipients of an action. Mills (1995: 143-144) argued that it "is about how actions are represented; what kind of actions appear in a text, who does them and to whom they are done". As Kress and Hodge (1993) stated, causality is tightly linked to the activation or passivation of an actor. The second category is individualisation/assimilation which

means the actors can be referred to as individuals or groups. Foregrounding an actor as an individual facilitates encoders' identification with him/her. Assimilation is later divided into collectivisation and aggregation. Collectivisation is instantiated through plurality and nouns showing a mass, while aggregation is realized in terms of quantification which represents social actors as statistics. Aggregation is useful for manufacturing consent as it provides legitimation through showing what the majority thinks or does (van Leeuwen 2008). The third category is nomination/categorization. As the name implies, nomination means referring to social actors in terms of their names and titles in a formal, semi-formal, or informal way. Nameless actors in a text lead to dehumanization whilst the way an actor is named affects our stance to them (Richardson 2007). On the other hand, social actors can be categorised in terms of their functions or identities. Functionalization depicts characters with reference to the actions they do while identification describes who they are. The latter divides into classification, relational identification, and physical identification. The first subgroup is concerned with categorizing people with regard to their gender, age, race, ethnicity, wealth, religious orientation, and social class. Relational identification classifies social actors in terms of their personal, kinship, or work relations with others. Finally, physical identification portrays social actors in terms of physical characteristics. Representing actors in terms of their function or identity influences our perception of them. For instance, describing someone as a 35-year-old Syrian doctor and father in contrast to a 20-year-old unskilled male would provide much more different perspectives about their status.

As my dataset is big for a detailed and objective manual analysis, I took advantage of Corpus Linguistic tools to examine discourse topics and representation of the immigrants. I used the USAS semantic annotation set within Wmatrix (Rayson 2009) to find out discourse topics associated with the immigrants. As semantic macrostructures (van Dijk 1988), topics are "construed by a probability distribution over a fixed vocabulary" (Murakami et al. 2017: 246) which means certain words are highly associated with certain topics. For instance, we are more likely to see words like *plight*, *flee* and *squalor* in the texts with the topic of immigration. Considering topics as "a recurring pattern of word co-occurrence" (Brett 2012), automated semantic tagging enables us to see the aboutness or the salient discourse topics of a text. The USAS automatic tagging system, which is based upon the Longman Lexicon of Contemporary English (McArthur 1981), is made up of a hierarchical system of semantic categories under 21 main discourse fields with 232 subcategories (see Archer, Wilson and Rayson 2002). Rather than single keywords which show statistically significant words in each corpus, this software enabled finding out grand semantic categories associated with the immigrants by grouping low frequency synonyms or semantically related words together which can be ideal to avoid repetition and thus excluded from the key word lists (Baker

2006). I also used Wordsmith 6.0 (Scott 2012) to observe linguistic tendencies in the collocations and concordances of the search terms ‘migrant(s), asylum seeker(s) and refugee(s)’. Collocational analysis is concerned with statistical determination of the consistent patterns in the co-occurrence of two words. It provides information about the most prevalent ideas engaged with a word (Baker 2006). Concordance analysis is the examination of a given word in its context on the left or right side (Gabrieletos and Baker 2008). As Hunston (2010: 9) noted, concordances group “many instances of a word or phrase, allowing the user to observe regularities in use that tend to remain unobserved when the same words or phrases are met in their normal contexts”. Seeing various instances of a word’s usage in a context would help to understand linguistic tendencies about it.

4. Background to the events

According to the United Nations Refugee Agency (2016), approximately 12.4 million people were forced to move out of their homelands due to conflict and persecution in 2015. Whilst Europe has always been a haven for immigrants, the continent witnessed the greatest wave of migration in 2015 since the Second World War. A record number of 1.3 million people applied for asylum in the EU states, which is nearly as twice high as the migration into Europe in 1992, after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the collapse of the Soviet Union (Connor 2016). The immigrants, mainly from the conflict-ridden countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria tried to reach Europe via perilous crossings in the Mediterranean Sea, some of which ended up in deadly accidents like the one in the waters off the Italian island Lampedusa with a death toll of 650. The rising number of immigrants heading towards Northern European countries after reaching Southern Europe increased the tension in the political and public sphere which led to strict border controls and violent clashes between the police and the immigrants. For the purposes of this study, two cases with historical significance in the timeline of the European Migrant Crisis were chosen. The first case was concerned with the death of the three-year-old Syrian child Aylan Kurdi, who drowned on the 2nd of September 2015 while trying to cross the Aegean Sea on a rubber boat with his family to reach the Greek island of Kos. The image of his lifeless body lying on the shore sparked an unprecedented international outcry which forced European leaders to review their migration policies (Smith 2015). The German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s announcement about the open-door policy to the displaced people from the war-torn regions not only caused a surge in the flow of migrants, but also fuelled the debate about the integration of the immigrants and the sustainability of free circulation within the union. The second case was about the mass sexual assaults and robberies that

were claimed to be committed by the male immigrants with a North-African and Arab origin in the German city of Cologne on New Year's Eve. Hundreds of sexual assaults, thefts and five rapes were reported to the police. Half of the suspects were reported to be foreign nationals that recently arrived in Germany (Noack 2016). The recent rise of sexual crime in Germany resulted in the passing of a stricter sexual assault law which facilitates the deportation of the immigrants involved in the related crime. Whilst the government and the media were severely criticized for trying to cover up the organized crime for the fear of awakening hatred against the immigrants, a few were badly attacked in several cities and far right groups such as Pegida organized rallies to protest Germany's open-door policy (Hume 2016).

5. Data

The data were collected from hard news, editorials, and opinion columns of four British dailies and their Sunday editions which are *The Guardian*, *The Times*, *The Sun* and *The Daily Mail*. While choosing the newspapers; reporting style, political affiliations, and circulation figures were taken into consideration. The former two are known as quality newspapers whilst the Guardian has a liberal left stance and the Times is conservative (Smith 2017). The latter two are both tabloids with conservative views (ibid.). The data were downloaded from the NexisUK database within the span of one month of both events. The newspaper articles on Aylan Kurdi's death were searched with the keywords 'Aylan Kurdi' and 'Alan Kurdi' between 2.09.2015 and 2.10.2015 whilst the data concerning the Cologne Sexual Assaults were browsed with the keywords of 'Cologne', 'New Year' and 'Sexual Assaults' between 31.12.2015 and 31.01.2016. Table 1 shows the size of the newspaper corpus concerning both events.

Table 1. The size of newspaper corpus

Newspaper	The Death of Aylan Kurdi		The Cologne Sex Assaults	
	Number of articles	Number of words	Number of articles	Number of words
The Guardian	68	65.500	42	39.191
The Times	35	29.788	34	20.516
The Daily Mail	18	17.729	39	25.415
The Sun	43	20.450	61	22.627
<i>Total</i>	164	133.467	166	107.749

When comparing the number of words in each newspaper corpus in both cases, it is seen that the tragic death of the three-year-old Syrian child Aylan Kurdi received

much more attention from the quality newspapers than the tabloids. On the other hand, the sexual attacks in Cologne on New Year's Eve which were reported to be committed by the male immigrants with Arab or North African origin had relatively much more coverage in the tabloids. Although the tabloids tend to have shorter forms of news texts than the broadsheets (Pennock 2000), both *The Sun* and *The Daily Mail* reported much more than *the Times* about the Cologne Sexual Assaults considering the number of words. The considerably larger volume of bad news about the immigrants in tabloids is not only a reflection of the tabloids' long term negative and accusatory stance to the immigration (Gabrieletos and Baker 2008; Baker 2010) but also an attempt to create negative mental mappings as reiteration of a particular topic in media reinforces its retention in collective consciousness (Fiske and Taylor 1991).

6. Analysis

Following Richardson (2007: 47) who noted "Words convey the imprint of society and of value judgements in particular they convey connoted as well as denoted meanings", my analysis began with finding out the most dominant semantic categories, therefore discourse topics with the help of the USAS (Rayson 2009). Only the first 50 key semantic categories were taken into consideration as they presented the most significant data. The concordances of each category were carefully read to discover lexis engaged with them. Figure 1 shows prevalent semantic categories and associated lexis in both corpora.

A general view of the data in Figure 1 reveals that the semantic categories, therefore discourse topics in both corpora were generally negative despite remarkably contrasting contextualisations. The semantic domains in the Aylan Kurdi corpus were concerned with the plight of the immigrants (difficult, sad, dead, weak, warfare, kin, quantities, time: new and young, trying hard) and the public reaction (helping, residence, ethical, money, wanted, emotional actions, states and processes, strong obligation, or necessity). The concordances of each semantic category reveal that there was wide public sympathy towards the misfortune of the immigrants and they were generally positioned as victims. In (1), while immigrants were portrayed as passive objects of persecution and a forced journey rather than volitional agents, collective empathy towards them was requested through highly emotive vocabulary (bold added in all examples).

- (1) **ONLY somebody with a heart of stone** could fail to be moved by the **plight** of families from Syria and other countries **desperately** making their way to the relative safety of Western Europe. (*The Sun*, 10 September 2015)

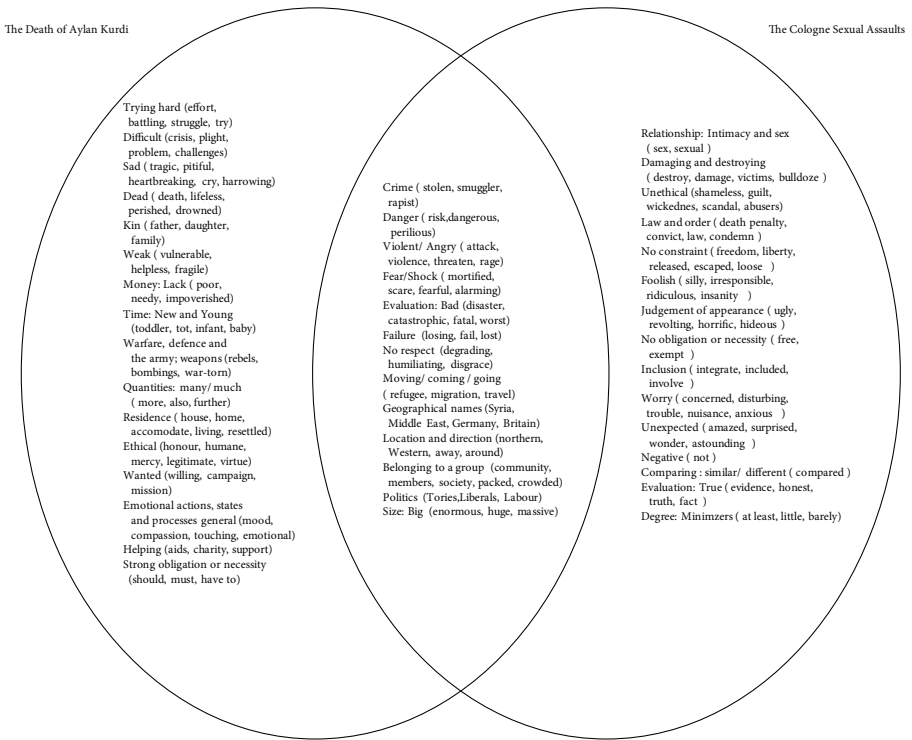


Figure 1. The key semantic categories in the newspaper corpora

On the other hand, the key domains in the Cologne Sex Assaults corpus were related to the deviance (relationship: intimacy and sex, damaging and destroying, law and order), conflict (unethical, no obligation or necessity, inclusion, worry, judgement of appearance) and political criticism towards the open door policy (no constraint and foolish). The immigrants were represented as aberrant and uncontrollable whilst the tone was rather distressing. In (2), words like Casablanca, North Africa and Maghreb not only show the geographic origin but also implied social and cultural incongruence of the immigrants through identifying them as distant and alien to the German culture. The possibility of social harmony was contradicted through crime related lexis characterising immigrants.

- (2) German police arrested 40 suspects in an operation codenamed **Casablanca** targeting **high levels of crime** by **members of the north African community** after the **sex attacks** on women on New Year's Eve. The raids in a district of Düsseldorf known as the "**Maghreb quarter**" were designed to show that there were **no "no-go" areas for police**, amid concern that **migrant crimes** were being overlooked.
- (*The Times*, 19 January 2016)

There were also common categories in both corpora which can be grouped as illegality (crime), threat (danger, fear/shock, violent/angry), problem (failure, evaluation: bad, no respect, size: big) and movement (moving/coming/going, location and direction). Immigrants were framed as unruly, and threatening masses that were streaming into Europe. In (3), the author portrayed them as a huge mob that should be kept out of the country.

- (3) Maybe I'm heartless. Maybe I'm mistaken. But I'm not convinced that the answer to the unfolding humanitarian disaster in Syria is to open our borders to **tens of thousands of refugees**.
(The Daily Mail, 12 September 2015)

Subsequent to the overview of the key semantic categories and associated discourse topics, the analysis was furthered with a detailed examination of the concordances of the search terms that represented the main social actors of the migrant crisis which were migrant(s), asylum seeker(s) and refugee(s). The term ‘immigrant’ was excluded from the analysis as the search results showed rather rare uses of it throughout the corpus. Before discussing the data in Table 2 which presents the distribution of the search terms in both corpora, it is necessary to define migrant, asylum seeker, and refugee. According to the Oxford Dictionary of English (2003), a migrant is a person who moves from one place to another so as to find work or better living conditions. Asylum seeker is described as a person who has left home country as a political refugee to seek asylum in another country. On the other hand, a refugee is defined as a person who has to leave his/her country of origin to escape from war, persecution, or a natural disaster. It should be noted that being ‘forced’ is the key term in the distinction between migrant and refugee as the latter doesn’t leave their country willingly but compelled to escape because of death threat or oppression. Refugees not only have legal status under international law but also awaken empathy whereas migrant is a rather neutral term as they are not urged to flee (Cranz 2016). The way major actors are named in the migrant crisis is of great significance as conflating the terms may “lead to problems for refugees and asylum seekers, as well as misunderstanding in discussions of asylum and migration” (Edwards 2016).

Table 2. The distribution of social actors in both corpora

	migrant(s)			asylum seeker(s)			refugee(s)		
	Aylan Kurdi	Cologne Sexual Assaults		Aylan Kurdi	Cologne Sexual Assaults		Aylan Kurdi	Cologne Sexual Assaults	
The Guardian	99	106		32	43		726	227	
The Times	86	150		29	39		266	66	
The Sun	72	151		11	45		150	73	
The Daily Mail	70	167		2	33		106	33	

As can be seen in Table 2, all newspapers used ‘migrant(s)’ and ‘asylum seekers(s)’ more frequently in their reporting of the Cologne Sexual Assaults than the coverage of the Aylan Kurdi’s death. On the other hand, the term ‘refugee(s)’ was more frequently used in the reporting of the drowning of Aylan Kurdi. Such a conspicuous change can be a result of the connotations of the terms as the term ‘refugee(s)’ is more emotionally charged than the other two terms and evokes much more sympathy.

6.1 Analysis of the corpus of the death of Aylan Kurdi

An overview of the collocations and concordances of the search terms, which are migrant(s), asylum seekers(s) and refugee(s), showed that all newspapers expressed concern and sympathy in varying degrees for the hardship of the immigrants through words like *plight*, *desperate*, *destitute*, *squalor*, and *vulnerable*. *The Daily Mail* had the most negative stance while the other three newspapers covered the immigrants more positively with a focus on humane aspects such as being tired, terrified, or sobbing with relief. In (4), a moment of affection was depicted to show that the immigrants were not callous mobs but individuals who had emotional intimacy like any of the readers.

- (4) Inside a small tent, at 8.40 in the morning, surrounded by squalor and exhaustion – piles of clothing, empty sleeping bags, prone and sleeping people – a young refugee couple turn to each other, hug, and kiss.

(*The Guardian*, 22 September 2015)

On the other hand, their onward progress was problematized in all newspapers through collocations of the search terms with *crisis*, *chaos*, and *catastrophe*. In addition, numbers showing large quantities and metaphorical phrases like *mass exodus*, *tidal wave*, and *an uncontrolled flood* were frequently used to underline the gravity of the problem. In accordance with previous research (Gabrieletos and Baker 2008; Baker 2010) all newspapers defined the immigrants’ progress as illegal. The validity of the immigrants’ motives was also heavily questioned through the phrases like *genuine asylum seekers*, *proper refugees*, and *economic migrants* in *The Daily Mail*. These phrases were used in quotation marks in *The Guardian* to express criticism towards such usage.

Considering the activation/passivation, the most striking frame was the depiction of the immigrants as the helpless objects of the oppressive people and hard circumstances as in (5) and (8). In (5), the misery was stressed by associating a child with lexis showing despair and poverty. Although ‘fleeing’ shows an action carried out by the immigrants, the movement was rationalized by referring to the causes of the forcible displacement. Legitimizing the movement through causality is a recurrent strategy in the corpus, as was the case in (5).

- (5) **Children like two-year-old Narien**, who stares **forlornly** from the **sweltering, fly-blown tent she calls home** in a refugee camp in northern Syria. Her short life has been spent **fleeing** men with guns, whether from President Assad's regime, which bombs its own people, or from the murderous IS.

(*The Sun*, 10 September 2015)

Despite frequently positive representations of the immigrants, there were also negative portrayals in which they were the agents of unmanageable and lawless behaviour such as "press forward against razor wire fences" (*The Daily Mail*, 19 September 2015) or else "smuggled themselves through the Channel tunnel" (*The Times*, 9 September 2015). In (6), they were framed as unpredictable and wild.

- (6) Coastguards and riot police armed with batons struggled to control around 2500 people, screaming "Keep back" at the crowds as they **surged** towards a government-chartered ship bound for Athens.

(*The Guardian*, 8 September 2015)

Regarding the categories of individualisation/assimilation, there was a general tendency to refer to the immigrants as a horde, which not only blurred the individual differences but also created a sense of a homogenous and faceless crowd. In (7), assimilation was realized through collectivization. The stark contrast between 'some' immigrants with legitimate motives and 'many others' with opportunistic ideals was underlined not only to generalize them but also to delegitimize their acts.

- (7) **Tens of millions of people** in the Middle East and Africa are bent upon quitting their native lands to make a new life in Europe. **Some** are indeed victims of war and famine. **Many others**, though, especially from West Africa, are trying to take advantage of the fact that our continent offers a vastly more promising future for them than they could have in their own countries.

(*The Daily Mail*, 4 September 2015)

There were also instances of individualisation throughout the corpus. While *The Sun*, *The Times* and *The Guardian* more frequently identified the immigrants as individuals, *The Daily Mail* only did it if they were involved in crime. When individualised, the immigrants were nominated and frequently categorised with reference to their familial bonds, age, nationality, ethnic origins, and occupation. In *the Guardian* and *the Times*, there were frequent references to the religious orientations of the immigrants whereas the other newspapers' avoidance from such reference could be an intentional move so as not to sound Islamophobic. As in (8), individualised immigrants were allowed to narrate their personal stories and motives in *The Sun*, *The Times* and *The Guardian*.

- (8) “The people in Germany welcoming the refugees encourage me much more to flee,” said **Mohammad Burhan, 30**, who was buying a ticket **with his pregnant wife, a teacher, his 15-month-old son and his 60-year-old mother**. The family fled their farm near the Syrian town of Zabadani, which **has been under siege by regime forces since the start of July**. He said that their fields were heavily mined and hundreds of fruit trees were dying. (*The Times*, 9 September 2015)

Analysis of the collocations and concordances of the search terms show that excluding *The Daily Mail* the newspapers in general adopted an empathetic approach by focusing on the causes of the immigration and detailed portrayals of the tragedy of the immigrants. Individuation and representation of them as family members also contributed to this relatively positive coverage.

6.2 Analysis of the corpus of the Cologne Sexual Assaults

A general view of the of the collocations and concordances of the search terms migrant(s), asylum seekers(s) and refugee(s) revealed that except for *the Guardian* which had a more neutral stance, there was a strong negative attitude towards the immigrants through lexical associations such as *angry, threatening, aggressive, and alien*. Immigration was identified with terrorism and crime, for immigrants were frequently portrayed as *gangs, throngs, thugs, and jihadists*. Contrary to the coverage of the death of Aylan Kurdi, there were nearly no references to the causes of immigration in *the Sun*, *the Daily Mail* and *the Times*. When mentioned, the motive for migration was simplified as opportunism. Similar to the findings of Arcimaviciene (this volume) and A'Beckett (this volume) immigration was also framed as troublesome and threatening through the use of numbers, water metaphors, and words like *crisis, controversy, debate, and illegal* throughout the corpus.

Considering the activation/passivation, it was seen that they were generally represented as active agents of violence, sexual offences, and anti-social behaviour such as *groping, robbery, and attacking and molesting* as in (9):

- (9) We had a grim warning of what this means on New Year's Eve, when **gangs of hundreds of young men of North African or Middle Eastern appearance**, many of them apparently drunk and **speaking Arabic**, crowded around female revellers in Cologne and Hamburg, and **robbed them while committing vile sexual assaults** (*The Daily Mail*, 8 January 2016)

When they were represented in passive clauses, they were the objects of formal procedures, instructions or prohibitions by the officials to make them integrate or comply with the rules of the society such as “being given lessons in how to flirt” (*The Sun*, 24 January 2016) or “banned from a public swimming pool after women

complained of sexual harassment” (*The Times*, 16 January 2016). As for individualization/assimilation, there was a general tendency to collectivize the immigrants as masses of males with a focus on untamed behaviour, which was deemed “as a recipe for disaster” (*The Daily Mail*, 21 January 2016) or “demographic time bomb” (*The Times*, 7 January 2016). (10) exemplifies how all the immigrants were generalized as ‘men’ as if there were no female immigrants.

- (10) And above all it ensures that we do not face the demographic time bomb that Merkel has ticking at the heart of Germany – **a million plus young Muslim men** who care nothing about western values of freedom and equality.

(*The Sun*, 24 January 2016)

There were also a few instances of individualization through which a distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ immigrants was noted. The former group was formed by the already assimilated or newly arrived immigrants who expressed their sympathy for the victims of the attacks. There was a common trend to individualize the ‘good’ immigrants whilst the ‘bad’ ones who upset the social harmony were collectivized as in (9) and (10). (11) shows individualization of a socially acceptable immigrant.

- (11) **Shackar Hassoun, 47, who arrived a year ago from Damascus**, said: “This sexual abuse was social terrorism. I fled Syria because of terrorism and I was very sad that it should happen here, especially on a special occasion.”

(*The Times*, 16 January 2016)

Except for *the Guardian*, there was an inclination to identify the immigrants with regard to their gender, age, geographic origin, ethnicity, and religious orientation as in (9) and (10). Contrary to the previous corpus, no sort of relational identification which shows social actors in terms of familial or professional relations were found. This created a sense of an aimless, rootless, and unskilled crowd which would be rather difficult to assimilate. *The Guardian*, on the other hand, adopted a more neutral stance through which the immigrants were continued to be identified in terms of their occupation and reasons for their escape. Consider (12):

- (12) To explain why, **Mahmoud Obed, a 27-year-old Syrian metal worker** newly arrived on Agathonisi, takes out his mobile phone. He flicks through his pictures **until he finds one of a destroyed house. This was his home, he says, bombed a fortnight ago by pilots from Russia**, which has allied with the Syrian dictator, Bashar al-Assad.

(*The Guardian*, 12 January 2016)

There was an inclination to overgeneralize the immigrants as criminals in this corpus excluding *the Guardian*. Unlawful behaviour was linked with masculinity and Islamic background. Immigrants were generalized as mobs of primitive, intrusive and undistinguishable males. Through such depictions, the journalists held on

to the long-held misconception of *the crowd* identified with reduced intelligence, lack of control and violence (Reicher 2001). In addition, with frightening scenarios which pictured ‘those immigrants’ travelling freely to the UK, the tabloids and *the Times* reinforced the existence of a gathering threat. Here, the journalists took advantage of proximation (Cap 2014; Cap this volume) by means of which the encoder presents spatially or temporally distant events or state of actions as threateningly approaching to the encoder and the addressee’s shared deictic centre. This rhetorical pragmatic strategy justifies the encoder’s pre-emptive action to defy the envisaged threat. Considering the Excerpts (3), (7), (9) and (10), the construal of conflict was not only spatial and temporal but also ideological as immigrants were framed as an imminent threat with hostile ideologies approaching to the home territory.

The Times, *the Daily Mail* and *the Sun*’s considerably negative coverage of the immigrants through persistent foregrounding of adversities and backgrounding any sort of positivity is a reflection of these newspapers’ institutional stance towards immigration. Such textual silences or emphasis is ideological and tactical (Chomsky 1989; Jaworski 1993) as previous research on British press’ attitude towards ethnic relations has shown that the press intentionally select, organize and present events in a way which then contributed to the maintenance of “commonsense whiteness” (Law 2002: 77).

7. Conclusion

This study was designed to discover how language resources were employed to reflect the changing media attitude towards the immigrants in two contradictory cases from the period of 2015 migrant crisis. The comparison of the discourse topics and characteristics, features and traits attributed to the immigrants in both corpora corroborated the findings of the previous research (Reisigl and Wodak 2001; van Dijk 2008; Gabrieleatos and Baker 2008; KhosraviNik 2009) which has drawn attention to the negativity surrounding the immigrants. Regardless of the news content, the association of the immigrants with numbers showing large quantities, natural disaster metaphors, and violation of law and order highlighted a repeated pattern in the news repertoire which showed that evaluative meanings are not idiosyncratic, but socially shared by a specific discourse community (Stubbs 2001). In terms of van Dijk (1989: 218), dominant ethnic stereotypes or prejudices cause representation of these groups of minorities as “problem people” which then led to a complication of the issue.

When the news content was considered, the most interesting finding was the tendency to make fallacious generalizations in the profiling of the immigrants. As

Reisigl and Wodak (2001) noted, judgements of isolated experiences with the individuals were transferred to the representation of the whole group of immigrants in both cases. That is to say, the immigrants were embodied as needy and defenceless war victims following the death of Aylan Kurdi, but were then typified as uncivilised young Muslim males in the second corpus. The divergence is noteworthy as the backgrounds and motives of the immigrants were nearly unchanged from the first incident to the second. Apart from the nature of the events, such a change can be a result of the reaction towards Germany's open door policy which enabled immigrants' travel to the UK. With regard to the Proximation Theory (Cap 2014), the possibility of an influx was presented in terms of a spatial, temporal and ideological threat to the home-identity. The linkage of a few immigrants to the assaults in Cologne seemed to reignite the immigrant-as-a-threat stereotype.

Another interesting finding was when the media were sympathetic towards the immigrants as in the first corpus, the immigrants were treated as credible sources that were either allowed to speak for themselves or else depicted in great detail with emotive vocabulary. Reading the news story from the perspective of a character results in identification and provides the readers' adoption of the character's goals and intentions (Hartung et al. 2016). Conversely, personal narratives or circumstantial portrayals were nearly absent when they were deprecated as in the second corpus, which can be seen as a subtle form of biased reporting. In addition to individuation, causality was also observed in the first corpus so as to evoke the readers' sympathy. However, lack of reference to the causes of immigration and depictions of immigrants as anonymous hordes of males in the Cologne Sexual Assaults dataset ended in decontextualisation, dehumanization and pathologisation (Reicher 2001). Jullian (2011) stated that such intentional choices have strong ideological implications. As the voices of the institutionalised communication who offer a "skewed and judged" (Fowler 1991: 11) version of the real world, the journalists contribute to the reproduction of the dominant ideologies (Hall et al. 1980). To fend off criticism about discriminatory discourse, in line with the findings of Lamb (2014), the newspapers based their arguments on the distinction made between 'good' and 'bad' immigrants in the second corpus. In conclusion, the results of the study indicate that the extent of the perceived tragedy which was epitomized by the harrowing image of Aylan Kurdi and the construal of threat which was evoked by the prospect of an influx into the UK determined the newspapers' stance towards the immigrants. The present study confirms previous findings and contributes additional evidence that suggests the mainstream media are the dominant voice of ideology and main source of the public's understanding of ethnic relations.

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