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**A critical discourse analysis of how Syrian and Ukrainian refugees are constructed on
Twitter in the United Kingdom**

MSc Social and Cultural Psychology

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Abstract

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, many European countries have been criticised for prioritising Ukrainian refugees over those from other countries. The United Kingdom's creation of visa schemes specifically for Ukrainian refugees has generated debate around the universality of humanitarianism. While the literature highlights predominantly negative discourses surrounding refugees in mainstream media, little research has investigated this on social media, or compared the discourse for two groups of refugees. In this study, I examined the Twitter discourse surrounding Syrian and Ukrainian refugees in the United Kingdom at the time of their respective crises. These discourses were then compared with a second data set, investigating Twitter users' retrospective comparisons between Syrian and Ukrainian refugees. A critical discourse analysis of the original data highlighted that these discourses were extremely similar. Both Syrian and Ukrainian refugees were discursively constructed as either threats or victims, while the predominance of pro-refugee tweets for both groups swayed the discourse towards the portrayal of refugees as victims. However, the retrospective Twitter comparisons criticised the United Kingdom's seemingly favourable response to Ukrainian refugees over other refugee groups. These findings indicate that online representations of Syrian and Ukrainian refugees are more similar than previously suggested. However the discrepancies in the findings between the original and retrospective data raises some interesting questions around how online discourse is shaped.

Introduction

“They seem so like us. That is what makes it so shocking... War is no longer something visited upon impoverished and remote populations.”

This statement was made by British journalist and politician Daniel Hannan, in his coverage of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. This conflict has led to the fastest-growing refugee crisis since the Second World War, encouraging a large-scale international humanitarian response (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2022a). The United Kingdom (UK) has responded by introducing various visa schemes specifically for Ukrainian refugees, the capacity of which greatly exceeds previous measures, such as the resettlement scheme for Syrian refugees (Morrice, 2022; Walsh & Sumption, 2022). The unique response to Ukrainian refugees is arguably reflected in the media, generating criticisms of preferential humanitarianism (Bayoumi, 2022). The general media discourse echoes Hannan’s sentiment: Europeans expect such crises to develop in the Global South, not within Europe. The Ukrainian refugee crisis is therefore discordant with the existing assumption that war and disaster are confined to geographically distant and low-income territories (Morrice, 2022).

Given this context, there is a need to understand how the discourse surrounding Ukrainian refugees compares to those from other countries. There is a wealth of literature exploring mainstream media representations of refugees, predominantly portraying them as a threat to the host country (El Refaie, 2001; KhosraviNik, 2010; Saxton, 2003). However, few studies have compared how these representations vary for different groups of refugees. Furthermore, social media is becoming an increasingly prevalent media source for the public to discuss and comprehend sociopolitical issues such as the acceptance of refugees (Bossetta et al., 2017). Despite this, there is limited research focusing specifically on social media discourse of refugees.

As a result of the sociopolitical and research context, the present study will be an exploratory investigation, with the following research objectives:

- To identify how Syrian and Ukrainian refugees are discursively constructed on Twitter in the UK.
- To discern if there are any differences in these discourses surrounding Syrian and Ukrainian refugees, and if so, identify what these are.

The study will adopt critical discourse analysis as the theoretical framework and method of analysis, to examine Twitter data and understand how these discourses are constructed in the online sphere. The data includes tweets posted at the time of the Syrian and Ukrainian refugee crises respectively, as well as tweets retrospectively comparing these two groups. This study will therefore contribute to the literature surrounding media representations of refugees, as well as that discussing social media discourse more generally. Unlike the existing literature, the present study will integrate these areas to consider how different refugee groups are discursively constructed on social media in the UK context.

The following section will contextually and theoretically situate the study, before critically discussing the literature on discourses surrounding refugees. The methodology will then be described, followed by the presentation and critical interpretation of the findings. These findings will be discussed, highlighting limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

Literature Review

In this chapter I will outline the context of this study, discussing the UK's respective responses to Syrian and Ukrainian refugees. I will then present critical discourse analysis as the theoretical framework and the relevant literature surrounding mainstream and social media depictions of refugees, predominantly portraying refugees as either threats or victims. Finally, I will present my research questions for the current study.

Background: The UK Response

Firstly, I would like to clarify my use of terminology in this paper. While there are many terms to describe displaced people, I will be using the term ‘refugee’ throughout. A refugee is defined as an individual fleeing conflict or persecution, who has crossed borders to seek safety in another country (UNHCR, n.d.-b). This is the term most widely used in the literature, and when discussing the appointed refugee crisis (Dawood, 2023).

To understand why I am focusing specifically on Syrian and Ukrainian refugees, it is important to examine the UK’s respective responses to these two groups. From its inception in March 2011, the Syrian conflict has resulted in the international displacement of approximately 6.8 million refugees (UNHCR, 2022b). Initially, there was no formal support scheme for Syrian refugees in the UK, until the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) was launched in January 2014 (Karyotis et al., 2021). This was still relatively small-scale, only resettling 239 refugees by September 2015 (National Audit Office, 2016). At the time, this generated some criticism around the adequacy of the UK’s response, particularly following published photographs of a three-year-old boy, Alan Kurdi, who drowned during an attempt to flee Syria (BBC News, 2016; Farani et al., 2017). These criticisms induced David Cameron, then Prime Minister, to expand the SVPRS on September 7, 2015, pledging to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees by 2020 (Wintour, 2015). In total, the UK has provided resettlement or asylum protection to around 34,000 Syrians between 2011 and 2022 (Loft et al., 2023).

In comparison, the Russo-Ukraine war has led to the international displacement of around 6.2 million Ukrainian refugees (UNHCR, n.d.-a). Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the UK has introduced three different routes for Ukrainian refugees to enter the country (Home Office, 2023a). On March 4, 2022, the Ukraine Family Scheme was introduced, allowing Ukrainian refugees to join family members with UK

citizenship. Then on March 14, 2022, the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, more formally known as the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, was launched. This sponsored UK households to host Ukrainian refugees for six months. Finally, on May 3, 2022, the Ukraine Extension Scheme was introduced, allowing Ukrainian refugees and their immediate families to stay in the UK if they previously held permission to be in the UK. Despite these measures, the UK has been criticised for rigid bureaucracy and a lack of urgency in supporting Ukrainian refugees (Amnesty International UK, 2022; Casey, 2022; Slaven, 2022). However, these schemes demonstrate a more humanitarian response to Ukrainian than Syrian refugees, who were primarily confined to refugee camps (Ambos, 2022; Collinson, n.d.). In total, 181,400 people have arrived in the UK using the Ukrainian visa schemes (Home Office, 2023b).

Critics have suggested the arguably preferential response to Ukrainian refugees is due to Ukraine's closer proximity to the UK, cultural, racial, and religious similarities between Britons and Ukrainians, and the threat of Russia as a common enemy (De Coninck, 2022; Morrice, 2022). These differential government responses position the UK as a valuable and insightful context to conduct this research.

Theoretical Framework

To understand how Syrian and Ukrainian refugees are represented online, it is important to emphasise the inherently political nature of this study, and the influence of language on our sociopolitical world. These factors indicate critical discourse analysis (CDA) as the most appropriate theoretical framework for the present study. Originally conceptualised by Fairclough (1995), CDA is not merely a method of analysis, but a heterogeneous and interdisciplinary school of thought exploring how power and inequality are manifested and upheld through language (Mullet, 2018; Wodak, 2011a). The central thesis of the CDA approach therefore suggests that language is not a neutral medium, but a

social practice that both constitutes and is constituted by the social world (Wodak & Meyer, 2015).

Unlike other theoretical frameworks, the multidisciplinary nature of CDA allows for a thorough investigation of both discourses and the social reality they are embedded in (Fairclough, 2015; Mullett, 2018; Van Dijk, 1993b). This approach is particularly relevant in understanding how discourse continually reproduces the inequalities between refugees and host countries, and legitimises refugees' exclusion (Van Dijk, 1993b). These are expressed both on a macro-level of what is said, and on a micro-level of how this is said, through the lexico-grammatical construction of discourse (Van Dijk, 1993b). Despite an extensive body of CDA literature focusing on refugees (e.g., KhosraviNik, 2010), little research has compared the discursive construction of different refugee groups. Hence, this study will adopt CDA to examine the discourses for Syrian and Ukrainian refugees, to explore whether the inequality facing refugees is universal, or bound to certain groups.

CDA has induced much debate surrounding the role of the researcher, as scholars differ from other text-based researchers by taking an explicit sociopolitical stance within their work (Billig, 1999; Van Dijk, 1993b). CDA researchers aim to criticise the elites who produce and legitimise social inequalities, and pursue the emancipation of oppressed groups (Van Dijk, 1993b). It is therefore important to clarify that I am approaching the present study with a pro-refugee lens, aiming to expose how the inequalities refugees face are perpetuated through language. To achieve this, it is important to explore beyond the elite discourse of political rhetoric and mainstream media, and focus on the public's representations of refugees. Social media platforms provide a pertinent setting to investigate how refugees are constructed in everyday discourse, particularly due to their increasing prevalence as a news source (Bouvier & Machin, 2018). However, due to the notable lack of research exploring

social media discourses of refugees, this literature review is primarily limited to mainstream media discourse, but will incorporate social media-based research when possible.

Ideologies in Discourse

Ideologies are central constructs in CDA and in political psychology more generally. Defined broadly as ‘systems of ideas’ (Van Dijk, 2006, p. 115), they are collectively shared foundational representations that control and influence other beliefs. For example, beliefs about refugees may be founded on racist, xenophobic, or nationalist ideologies, which then inform the discourses surrounding refugees.

As a pioneering author regarding racist discourse, Wodak (2011b) provides a valuable overview of how discourses of exclusion and inclusion are constructed in mainstream media and political rhetoric, often relying on rigid distinctions between ingroups and outgroups. She describes how the concept of citizenship is grounded in nation-states’ definitions of inclusion, legitimising exclusionary discourses towards non-citizens, including refugees. Nationalist ideologies are then perpetuated in these discourses through certain discursive strategies, such as the prevalence of personal pronouns. Inclusion is determined as ‘us’ the host country, while ‘they’ as refugees are excluded, falling outside of the citizenship boundaries (Wodak, 2008; 2011b). Similarly, Van Dijk’s (1997b) notion of the ideological square suggests that discourses of refugees often centre on positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. Constraining the discourse to these polarised perspectives invokes nationalist ideologies by emphasising the host country’s generosity, while simultaneously justifying refugees’ exclusion (Esses et al., 2013; Olsen et al., 2016; Van Dijk, 1997b). Both Wodak and Van Dijk’s insights reference Billig’s (1995) concept of banal nationalism, which describes the inherent perpetuation of nationalism in everyday life. Altogether, these perspectives highlight the role of nationalist ideologies in discourse, contributing to the exclusion of outgroups such as refugees.

More recent research evidences how these ideologies are reflected in social media discourse surrounding refugees. While there is a lack of research focusing on the UK, other contexts demonstrate how nationalist references permeate the Twitter discourse; maintaining the host country's dominance, and contributing to the prevalent social media discrimination towards refugees (Bozdağ, 2020; Erdogan-Ozturk & Isik-Guler, 2020; Kelling & Monroe, 2022; Kreis, 2017; Özerim & Toley, 2021). Refugees were regularly positioned as 'Other', but so were individuals declaring solidarity with refugees, encouraging greater polarisation (Kreis, 2017; Özerim & Toley, 2021). Polarisation is a common feature of social media discourse resulting in echo chambers: enclosed online spaces that prevent exposure to alternative perspectives (Jamieson and Cappella, 2008). However, anti-refugee hashtags were also used in arguments for refugee solidarity, highlighting how hashtags can also be used to 'poke holes' in these echo chambers (Özerim & Toley, 2021, p. 204). Therefore, social media can perpetuate and legitimise elite discourses, or conversely encourage the formation and dissemination of alternative perspectives (Bouvier & Machin, 2018), that challenge the existing exclusionary discourse.

Refugees as a Threat

Returning to mainstream media, these discourses often depict refugees as a cultural threat. The nation is defined not just by its citizens but by the values and practices that the national identity embodies (Saxton, 2003). Refugees are presented as a cultural threat to this national identity, which is discursively expressed through the dehumanisation of refugees (Eberl et al., 2018; El Refaie, 2001; KhosraviNik, 2010). In a comprehensive review of British newspapers, KhosraviNik (2010) demonstrates how refugees are aggregated as 'applications' or 'arrivals', reducing them to their refugee status. Objectifying refugees as a large, unanimous group presents them as an uncontrollable force threatening national cohesion (Fotopoulos & Kaimaklioti, 2016; KhosraviNik, 2010). Other studies have

demonstrated the media's use of metaphor in these discourses, specifically those relating to war, water, and natural disasters. Describing refugees as an 'ambush' or 'the frontline' depicts them as the enemy, and fundamentally Other to the host country (Baker et al., 2008; Saxton, 2003). Metaphors associating refugees with water and natural disasters, such as 'flooding' or 'swarming', dehumanise refugees as a faceless tide destroying the host country (Eberl et al., 2018; El Refaie, 2001; Grove & Zwi, 2006). These strategies position refugees as a threat to the host culture, legitimising exclusionary practices (Saxton, 2003).

In comparison to these more subtle strategies in mainstream media, social media discourses perpetuate the portrayal of refugees as a cultural threat through more explicit expressions of racism (Bozdağ, 2020; Erdogan-Ozturk & Isik-Guler, 2020; Kreis 2017). For example, one Turkish study explored a Twitter hashtag translating to #idontwantsyriansinmycountry. Users frequently identified themselves as racist, and tied Syrian refugees to cultural differences such as 'Perverted, pedophilic Arab culture' (Erdogan-Ozturk & Isik-Guler, 2020, p. 5). These explicitly racist discourses are arguably encouraged by the anonymity of social media (Harlow, 2015). However, there has been a significant lack of social media research specifically focusing on the UK, and so it is important to establish whether these findings are reflected in this national context.

Comparative studies have illustrated how this notion of cultural threat is more discursively prominent surrounding certain groups of refugees. Whilst these studies are a minority in the literature, they valuably demonstrate how non-European refugees, particularly Muslims, are depicted as more culturally threatening in mainstream media (Dawood, 2023; Eberl et al., 2018; Krzyżanowski, 2018; Ryan & Tonkiss, 2022). These distinctions allude to ideologies of Islamophobia and cultural racism: the belief that Europeans are culturally superior, therefore justifying the exclusion of Others under the guise of cultural differences (Modood, 1997; Wren, 2001). More recently, studies have explored how these trends persist

in the discourses surrounding Ukrainian refugees compared to others. While refugees from non-European countries were presented as external threats to the host country, Ukrainian refugees were presented as victims that the host country was compelled to help (Blomberg, 2023; Viczko & Matsumoto, 2022). These findings highlight how discourse legitimises the exclusion of specific groups of refugees, and therefore the ideological square may only apply to those the host country defines as culturally Other.

As well as cultural threat, these differences are also evident in representations of refugees as a security threat to the host country. This threat is largely connected to male refugees, a trend not aided by the vast overrepresentation of male refugees in mainstream media portrayals (Ogude, 2022; Ryan & Tonkiss, 2022; Zaborowski & Georgiou, 2019). By reinforcing the association between refugees and criminality or terrorism, these depictions perpetuate the stereotype of the threatening male Other (Rettberg & Gajjala, 2016). The British media in particular highlights refugees as a security threat, with the Western media generally tying this to Muslim refugees (Ozdora-Aksak et al., 2021; Fotopoulos & Kaimaklioti, 2016; Huot et al., 2016). Goldberg (2006) argues that the European idea of Muslims has become synonymous with the threat of terrorism, with others suggesting that equating Muslim refugees with terrorists justifies increasingly restrictive policies (Abbas, 2019; Collyer, 2005). While these findings highlight the need to further investigate comparative representations of refugees, they are limited to mainstream media. As such, the current study will explore whether these differences are reflected in social media discourse.

Conversely, European refugees are also subject to specific forms of discrimination. While non-Europeans are depicted as more culturally threatening, Eastern-Europeans are instead associated with a greater economic threat (Eberl et al., 2018). Individuals from Eastern Europe are regarded as subordinate to Western Europe on the racial hierarchy, and so despite their apparent 'whiteness', they still face xenophobia and exclusionary discourses

(Lewicki, 2023). These ideologies are particularly common in the UK, due to the intricate political and economic history between the UK and Eastern-Europe (Lewicki, 2023).

However recently, Ukrainian refugees have been depicted as part of the general European ingroup. Carlsen and Toubøl (2023) investigated posts from a Danish pro-refugee Facebook group, finding that while veteran members supported aid for all refugees, newer members argued that Ukrainian refugees were more deserving. Their reasons included proximity to the host country, and not being Muslim, opposing the notion of Eastern-European refugees as an outgroup. While this study provides important insights, it focuses on a pro-refugee Facebook group, so posts may have been generally more positive. Therefore, there is a need to investigate these comparisons in the more general social media discourse.

Mainstream media reflects these discourses of economic threat more widely. In a classical series of work, Van Dijk explores how dominant representations frequently rely on differentiations between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ refugees (1988; 1993a; 1997a). Juxtaposing the tolerance of the UK in helping ‘good’ refugees who deserve aid, with ‘bad’ refugees who exploit this tolerance, again demonstrates the ideological square. Van Dijk’s analysis exhibits how ‘bad’ refugees are usually synonymous with bogus refugees: economic migrants and illegal immigrants posing as refugees in order to enter the host country. Bogus refugees are still highly prominent in elite discourses, depicted as threatening by exploiting the host country’s generosity for personal economic gain (Olsen et al., 2016; Esses et al., 2013; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Saxton, 2003; Zimmerman, 2011). Additionally, this demonstrates the narrow Western conceptualisation of refugees, with anyone outside of the helpless victim archetype construed as ingenuine (Olsen et al., 2016). The media’s conflation of the terms asylum-seeker, refugee, immigrant, and migrant further exacerbates this, blurring the boundaries between those forced to leave their country and those choosing to (Baker et al., 2008; Eberl et al., 2018; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Saxton, 2003). Not only do these

strategies invalidate refugees' experiences, they contribute to the dominant portrayal of zero-sum economic aid, in which host citizens are directly disadvantaged by the presence of refugees (Balch & Balabanova, 2016; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008). These discourses perpetuate the 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy, and contribute to the hegemonic view that the refugee crisis primarily affects host countries, not the refugees themselves (Goodman et al., 2017).

Refugees as Victims

Contrary to the majority of the literature, some studies explore pro-refugee discourses (Khan et al., 2022; Nerghes & Lee, 2019). Mainstream media frequently associate these with women and children (Barisione et al., 2019; Ryan & Tonkiss, 2022; Thomas et al., 2018). While men are predominantly portrayed as a threat to the host country, women and children are instead presented as passive victims to be saved (Axster, 2023; Ryan & Tonkiss, 2022), constructing a gendered dichotomy of refugee representations. Pro-refugee discourses are more prevalent on social media, with host citizens emphasising the suffering of refugees and declaring their solidarity (Barisione et al., 2019; Thomas et al., 2018). The presence of these alternative discourses in both mainstream and social media challenges the dominant portrayal of refugees as a threat.

However, these sympathetic discourses are arguably as harmful as overt exclusion. In a series of influential work, Chouliaraki contends that reducing refugees to their need and suffering perpetuates the archetype of the ideal refugee as a powerless and passive victim (Chouliaraki, 2006; 2010; 2012; Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017). She argues that this is equally dehumanising as threatening depictions; both degrading refugees to 'either a sufferer or a threat, yet never a human' (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017, p. 1165). Reducing refugees to their victimhood reflects ethnocentrism and colonial paternalism, as Western host countries are portrayed as parents or saviours to the infantilised refugees (Burman, 1994). Minimising

refugees' agency while emphasising host citizens' pity further demonstrates this power imbalance. Interestingly, on social media these sympathetic discourses are also associated with compassion fatigue: host citizens' feelings of detachment from refugees' suffering (Aldamen, 2023). Following the death of Alan Kurdi, the brief increase in online engagement quickly dissipated, as did solidarity, highlighting the fleeting nature of these discourses (Thomas et al., 2018). The dehumanising nature of these discourses may therefore exacerbate the ideological square and contribute to the inequality refugees face.

Altogether, this literature review highlights the predominantly dehumanising media discourse surrounding refugees, reducing them to either cultural, security, or economic threats, or passive victims. Not only did this review highlight the differences between mainstream and social media, it evidenced how these depictions can vary for different groups of refugees. Despite this, there is relatively little social media-based research investigating how different groups of refugees are portrayed. To contribute to this literature gap, the following research questions were developed:

RQ1: How are Syrian and Ukrainian refugees discursively constructed on Twitter in the UK?

RQ2: Are there any differences in these discourses surrounding Syrian and Ukrainian refugees, and if so, what are they?

Methodology

In this section, I will firstly discuss the research design, before describing the data collection process. I will then discuss the ethical and reflexive considerations that were engaged with throughout the research process. Finally, I will highlight the methods of data analysis.

Research Design

Due to the discursive nature of the research questions, a qualitative approach was adopted as this allows for an idiographic and contextually-grounded understanding of the online discourses and how they are constructed (Biggerstaff, 2012). On account of the lack of literature in this area, this will be an exploratory study aiming to gain preliminary insights into how different groups of refugees are discursively represented online.

The use of Twitter data is relevant to this study due to its dominance as a news source and prominence in modern communication and social life, particularly regarding political issues (Bouvier & Machin, 2018). In comparison to the one-to-many, top-down approach of mainstream media, the democratised, bottom-up nature of Twitter makes it a valuable platform for exploring public discourse (KhosraviNik, 2017; Prendergast & Quinn, 2021). The use of existing online data also provides a more accurate insight into the attitudes and perspectives at the time.

However, due to the quantity of Twitter data, this was initially described quantitatively, to identify any larger patterns or differences in the discourses surrounding Syrian and Ukrainian refugees. These then guided the subsequent CDA. Having outlined the theoretical appropriateness of CDA, this approach is methodologically relevant through its exploration of how inequality is perpetuated discursively (Wodak, 2011a). Therefore, this approach facilitates the investigation into whether public online discourse reflects the differential government and media responses to Syrian and Ukrainian refugees.

I felt it was important to juxtapose my own comparisons from the data at the time of these respective crises with how Twitter users themselves compared these two groups. By comparing the online discourse from the time with retrospective tweets, this allows for an interesting exploration and discussion of how online discourses are developed and remembered.

Data Collection

The original data set comprised of tweets from four different dates: two for Syria and two for Ukraine. Sampling by time frame is a common and recommended technique when using online data (Androutsopoulos, 2013). To make my comparisons as fair as possible, I collected tweets when the UK first accepted refugees from each country, and then when legislation was expanded. For Syria, this included the launch of the SVPRS on January 29, 2014, and then the expansion of this on September 7, 2015. For Ukraine, this included the introduction of the Ukraine Family Scheme on March 4, 2022, and then the establishment of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme on March 14, 2022.

The tweets were sampled using the advanced search function on Twitter. Data collection was limited to English tweets, due to my own language proficiency for analysis. Due to the high quantities of data on the selected dates, hashtags were used to identify relevant tweets: #SyrianRefugees and #UkrainianRefugees, which were chosen for their neutral stance. Tweets were only included if they were associated with the UK, which was determined by: specific reference to the UK or UK representatives, profiles locating the author in the UK, or reference to a UK news source. The systematic nature of this approach and defined criteria minimised algorithmic skewing of the data.

Following this, a second cycle of data collection was implemented, to investigate how Twitter users' retrospective comparisons between Syrian and Ukrainian refugees and compare to the previous data set. The same criteria were used again, but instead of country-specific hashtags, tweets had to include both the keywords Syria and Ukraine, as well as #Refugees. Due to the smaller quantity of tweets, these were not time-sampled, but all tweets fitting these criteria were included.

Ethics and Reflexivity

The study was approved by the LSE Research Ethics System, and data collection followed the LSE ethical guidelines regarding Twitter data. All tweets were publicly available, and informed consent was not required. As mentioned, only tweets with hashtags were included, which was partly due to ethical reasons. Hashtags are used to identify tweets pertaining to a specific topic, broadcasting them to a wider audience interested in this subject. Therefore, a user's incorporation of a hashtag signifies that they are intending for their post to be shared more widely. There were no ethical concerns surrounding the data, and all data was anonymised and stored in a secure, digitally encrypted location.

As a White, Western woman, I am aware that this will impact my interpretation, and my own perceptions of refugees. Additionally, while my identity as a UK citizen may have a positive influence on my research process due to a greater cultural understanding of the data, it may also lead to national bias impacting my interpretation. To counteract this, I am explicitly stating this before the analysis chapter, and will aim to remain critical of these potential biases throughout the study. I am therefore adopting the CDA approach, by stating and accounting for these influences rather than presenting my analysis and interpretation as objective (Billig, 1999; Van Dijk, 1993b).

Data Analysis

Initial Coding

Both the original and retrospective data sets were manually collected and analysed. The initial stage of analysis involved reading the data multiple times, and then coding each tweet as either pro or anti-refugee, as directed by other similar studies (Merts, 2022; Xu, 2019). These codes were reviewed several times through the rereading and coding process to ensure greater reliability. The data sets were then cleaned to exclude those simply sharing links to newspaper articles, political debates, and other external sources with no additional

narrative. Tweets which included the relevant hashtag but were thematically irrelevant to the topic of refugees were also excluded. The proportions of pro and anti-refugee tweets surrounding Syrian and Ukrainian refugees were calculated and compared, as were those for the retrospective comparison tweets.

Critical Discourse Analysis

The initial coding then guided the subsequent CDA. This approach argues that discourse and social reality are dialectically related, therefore analysing discursive strategies allows us to understand how they perpetuate power and inequality. For the present study, the data sets were first coded for the overarching themes and arguments supporting the pro or anti-refugee stance (see Appendix A). Any relevant contextual information was also explored. Following this, the data was analysed to examine the discursive strategies employed to supplement the tweets' argumentation, for example, lexical choices, representation of identities, and metaphor (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The most dominant discursive strategies regarding refugees were identified, and a smaller sample of each data set was compiled for a micro-level discursive analysis (see Appendix B). However, throughout, there was engagement with both textual and contextual level analysis to understand how online discourse relates to societal discourse and power relations (Fairclough, 1989; Wodak, 2011a).

However, using Twitter data required some platform-specific analytical considerations (Bouvier & Machin, 2018). Firstly, Twitter's restrictive character limit requires users to reduce their perspective to one or two sentences. Secondly, understanding the multimodal aspect of social media discourse is imperative to CDA (KhosraviNik, 2017). This includes the use of emojis or pictures, as well as inbuilt communicative actions within the platform, such as tagging through @username or hashtags. Social media posts also commonly reference mainstream media and other sources, known as intertextuality

(KhosraviNik, 2017). These features of social media highlight how the present study must tailor its use of CDA to Twitter as a platform, to comprehensively understand these discourses.

Analysis

In this section, I will discuss how my data analysis answers the research questions previously outlined. Firstly, I will present the quantitative description of the original data set, and then discuss the findings of the CDA. Finally, I will present my analysis of the retrospective Twitter comparisons.

Quantitative Description

The advanced search on Twitter led to a total of 741 tweets: 613 for Syrian refugees, 128 for Ukrainian refugees. After cleaning the data to remove those classed as not applicable, this left a total of 590 tweets: 471 for Syrian refugees, 119 for Ukrainian refugees.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Pro and Anti-Refugee Tweets for Syria and Ukraine

Country	Date 1		Date 2		Total	
	Pro	Anti	Pro	Anti	Pro	Anti
Syria	43	9	354	65	397	74
	83%	17%	84%	16%	84%	16%
Ukraine	37	0	60	22	97	22
	100%	0%	73%	27%	82%	18%

Table 1 presents the distributions of pro and anti-refugee tweets for each point of data collection surrounding Syrian and Ukrainian refugees. Representations of Syrian refugees were more stable, with the proportion of pro-refugee tweets only increasing by 1% from January 29, 2014 (83%) to September 7, 2015 (84%). In contrast, while only 10 days passed

between the two data collection points for Ukrainian refugees, representations changed more acutely. While 100% of the tweets on March 4, 2022 were pro-refugee, this decreased by 34% on March 14, 2022 (66%). However, when comparing the totals for the two countries, the distributions are extremely similar, as 84% of tweets about Syrian refugees were pro-refugee, compared to 82% of tweets about Ukrainian refugees. With regards to the research questions, this appears to suggest that the overarching discourses surrounding Syrian and Ukrainian refugees are relatively similar in their proportions of pro and anti-refugee discourse.

Critical Discourse Analysis

To further understand how Syrian and Ukrainian refugees are discursively constructed, the CDA will explore how these arguments were supplemented by discursive strategies. The analysis established considerable similarities in the types of discursive strategies employed in tweets regarding both Syrian and Ukrainian refugees, as well as for pro and anti-refugee tweets. Therefore, I will not be separating the CDA for tweets regarding Syrian and Ukrainian refugees, but analysing them simultaneously to highlight these similarities.

This section of the analysis is structured around these discursive strategies, to illustrate how language specifically perpetuates the host country's dominance and refugees' oppression. Three predominant strategies were identified. Firstly, identity categories were used to either strengthen or diminish the 'us' vs 'them' dichotomy. Secondly, lexical choices referencing morality were employed, endorsing the prioritisation of either refugees or UK citizens as morally right. Thirdly, the assignment of discursive agency demonstrated that refugees were represented as passive objects, while the UK were depicted as active agents. Generally, these findings suggest that both Syrian and Ukrainian refugees were portrayed as either threats or victims.

However, it is important to firstly acknowledge a general critical point. Throughout the data set, there was a complete lack of refugee voices. As Van Dijk (1993b) points out, access to discourse is an expression of privilege and power. The complete dominance of host country voices illustrates their power in controlling the online discourse, and therefore public attitudes regarding refugees (Van Dijk, 1993a). This immediately highlights the inequality of these discourses, and is important to keep in mind throughout this analysis.

Categories

Categorisation involves lexically assigning people to certain groups, such as ‘refugees’, ‘Muslims’, or ‘mothers’. Each category is associated with certain activities and connotations, and therefore employing specific categories draws on these associations (Benwell & Stokoe, 2011). Within the Twitter data, categorisations were made for refugees, British people, and the British government, to illustrate differences between these groups or create shared identity categorisations.

Tweet 1: **@UKLabour** believe that **we** should accept tens of thousands of **migrants** from Syria **un-vetted ISIS murderers** included **#SyrianRefugees** **#skynews**

Tweet 2: I support helping **genuine #UkrainianRefugees** who wish to come to the UK but that's a government responsibility not mine so my spare bedrooms will stay like that. 'Spare'. If they can house **#illegalimmigrants** in hotels they can house **those in genuine need. Our own** included.

Both of these tweets incorporate categories to support their anti-refugee stance. Tweet 1 argues that refugees pose a security threat to the UK. Incorporating the categories of ‘#SyrianRefugees’ and ‘un-vetted ISIS murderers’ synonymises refugees with terrorists. However, the author does not describe them as terrorists, but as ‘un-vetted ISIS murderers’. The violent and alarming language contributes to the moral panic associated with refugees, and perpetuates Islamophobic ideologies by suggesting Syrian refugees are a source of

terrorism. While there were references to security threats from Ukrainian refugees in the data set, tweets were actively criticising this stance. Therefore, this may highlight some difference in the type of threat discursively associated with each group.

Furthermore, combining the category ‘murderers’ with descriptions of them as ‘unvetted’ and ‘included’ within the refugee intake has a two-fold effect: it suggests they can covertly enter the UK, while criticising the government for being unable to detect this threat. The author's description of ‘@UKLabour believe that we’ specifically targets this criticism at the UK Labour party, by tagging their username. By segregating the categories of ‘@UKLabour’ and ‘we’, this suggests that the UK Labour party is not part of the category ‘we’ as UK citizens, blaming them for this supposed security threat. Tweet 1 therefore contributes to the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy between UK citizens and refugees. The use of categories subsequently augments the discursive construction of refugees as a security threat while criticising the government.

Tweet 2 instead argues that it should be the government’s responsibility to rehome those in need, including both refugees and UK citizens, in response to the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The description of ‘hous(ing) #illegal immigrants in hotels’ appears to reference asylum seekers being housed in hotels while their applications are processed (Reuters, 2020). Using this context and the conflation of the categories ‘#UkrainianRefugees’ and ‘#illegalimmigrants’, this equates all displaced people. This is further perpetuated by the overlexicalisation of the category ‘genuine #UkrainianRefugees’, consequently suggesting that there are other, ingenuine refugees. Similarly, Tweet 1 employs the categories ‘#SyrianRefugees’ and ‘migrants’, implying that the two are equivalent. The conflation of categories in both of these examples disregards refugees’ plight and lack of choice, and contributes to the economically-threatening notion of ‘bogus refugees’ (Zimmerman, 2011).

However, unlike Tweet 1, the anti-refugee stance of Tweet 2 is softened by the initial disclaimer: ‘I support helping genuine #UkrainianRefugees who wish to come to the UK but...’. Disclaimers are used to deflect undesirable attributions (Hewitt & Stokes, 1975), and here, this distances the author from an explicitly anti-refugee identity, while presenting an anti-refugee statement. While this appears more accepting, the category of ‘genuine #UkrainianRefugees’ highlights how the author’s acceptance is limited to those they deem ‘genuine’. This contributes to the narrow, Western conceptualisation of refugees as helpless victims, as anyone outside of this is not deemed ‘genuine’ (Olsen et al., 2016). Indirectly, this also perpetuates the dominance of the host country, as the UK has the power to decide who they deem ‘genuine’, and therefore deserving of aid.

Furthermore, when referencing ‘those in genuine need’, the author specifies that this includes the category of ‘our own’. The first person plural possessive determiner ‘our’ highlights the vulnerable British people who are excluded from such aid, exacerbating the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ dichotomy through the use of pronouns. This further contributes to the ideological square (Van Dijk, 1997b), by separating the positive representations of ‘our own’ ‘in genuine need’, from the negative representations of ‘#illegalimmigrants’ exploiting ‘our’ aid. Both tweets therefore demonstrate how categories can be employed to depict refugees as an economic and security threat.

Tweet 3: They will need help at #StPancras— **people2help refugees** fill out **Priti Patel’s** f****g visa applications. And **folk2look** after their **children** while the **poor mothers** jump thru **Cruella Patel’s** bureaucratic ‘flaming hoops’. #ukraine
#Ukrainianrefugees



In comparison, Tweet 3 uses categories to supplement its pro-refugee argument that the government is overcomplicating the bureaucratic process for refugees' entrance to the UK. Unlike Tweets 1 and 2, the author maintains the use of the term 'refugee', validating their refugee status. Additionally, the categories of 'children' and 'poor mothers' emphasise refugees' vulnerability and construct shared identities between UK citizens and refugees: they are 'children' and 'mothers' like 'us'. Not only does this reduce the divide of the ideological square, it provokes sympathy in the reader by emphasising the adversity refugees face (Chouliaraki, 2010).

However, this also arguably contributes to the gendered depictions of refugees. By only highlighting the vulnerability of 'mothers' and 'children', this perpetuates a gendered dichotomy where male refugees are threatening, while female refugees are victims (Ryan & Tonkiss, 2022). Therefore, while Tweet 3 appears pro-refugee, it may reinforce sexist ideologies and suggest only women and children are deserving of aid.

In comparison, the author categorises UK citizens as 'people' and 'folk', again incorporating a shared identity. While they could have described 'our people' or 'British folk', these general human categories reduce the divide between 'them' and 'us'. This contrasts with the author's description of Priti Patel, Home Secretary at the time. They metaphorically compare her to Cruella De Vil, the villain from *101 Dalmatians* (Smith, 1996). By initially naming her explicitly, it is clear who the subsequent metaphor is referencing. This comparison implies cruelty towards innocent and vulnerable parties; in this case the 'bureaucratic 'flaming hoops'' and 'f****g visa applications' for Ukrainian

refugees. The complicated bureaucracy of Ukrainian refugees' acceptance to the UK has been a common criticism (Casey, 2022; Slaven, 2022), illustrating how social media discourse can reflect wider societal discourses.

In summary, the use of categories in both pro and anti-refugee tweets reinforces the dominant discursive dichotomy portraying refugees as either a threat or as victims. Interestingly, many tweets, as illustrated by these examples, also used categories to criticise the governmental response to refugees, supplementing their pro or anti-refugee arguments. The categorical construction of refugees as economic threats or vulnerable victims was reflected in the discourse surrounding both Syrian and Ukrainian refugees. However, categories associating refugees with security threats were only oriented towards Syrian refugees.

Lexical Choices: Morality

Morality regards how we judge right or wrong actions, which is often reflected in the language we use (Keen, 2015). Throughout the data set, there were frequent references to morality, substantiating the relevant arguments as the morally right course of action. Generally, pro-refugee tweets argued that aiding refugees was the moral choice, while anti-refugee tweets contended that this aid should instead prioritise UK citizens. Discursively, this was achieved through lexical choices referencing vulnerability and distress, or ascribing responsibility.

Tweet 4: **How the hell** do you choose which #SyrianRefugees are the **most #needy**. All the **poor souls** are #desperate

Tweet 5: More reports by aid groups of #trafficking & #children going missing amid the #refugeecrisis due to #UkraineWar. As the war escalates, #Ukrainianrefugees will be increasingly **vulnerable to #exploitation**. Govs, NGOs and citizens **must unite to protect** them.



Tweet 6: There are **plenty of vulnerable people** in this country that government **should help Syria is not our problem** [@Daybreak](#) [#syrianrefugees](#)

Tweet 7: Rather than criticising people and bullying them into answering whether they are going to take **#UkrainianRefugees** in. Maybe we need to get **our own homeless off the streets and our own people into homes** instead of sofa surfing or living in overcrowded properties!

Tweets 4 and 5 emphasise the importance of protecting refugees, while Tweets 6 and 7 instead argue that helping UK citizens is more important. All the above tweets incorporate emotive language to discursively depict either refugees or UK citizens as innocent victims. For example, Tweet 4 more specifically criticises how the SVPRS is only available for the most vulnerable refugees. The author incorporates a semantic field of despair: ‘needy’, ‘poor’, and ‘#desperate’, lexically emphasising refugees’ vulnerability. The superlative ‘most #needy’ further demonstrates this argument, criticising the legislative hierarchy of need, claiming there should be universal aid for refugees. Tweet 4 also incorporates religious references, in the expressions ‘How the hell’, and ‘poor souls’. The exclamation ‘How the hell’ signifies initial outrage but avoids using profane language, improving the author's self-presentation (Stokoe & Edwards, 2007). The description of ‘poor souls’ perpetuates the depiction of refugees as innocent victims. These religious references therefore imply that the current legislation for accepting refugees transgresses religious and moral values (Bayram, 2010).

Tweet 5 similarly describes refugees as ‘vulnerable to #exploitation’. By characterising refugees as ‘vulnerable’ victims of ‘#trafficking’ and ‘#exploitation’, this emphasises that ‘protect(ing) them’ is the moral decision. The reference to the newspaper article, known as intertextuality, further legitimises this argument, and is a common feature of Twitter data (Bennett, 2018). The lexical and textual choices in these tweets highlight refugees’ victimhood and lack of power, legitimising the authors' arguments and constructing aid as a moral imperative. These similarities reflect the wider data set: many of the pro-refugee tweets surrounding both Syrian and Ukrainian refugees emphasised their vulnerability, and the UK’s moral imperative to help each group respectively.

However, in adopting CDA, it is also important to discuss how these pro-refugee tweets may contribute to the dehumanisation of refugees. Emphasising refugees’ vulnerability, such as the lexical choices of ‘#desperate’ and ‘vulnerable’, reduces them to their biological needs and suffering. By dehumanising them as objects of suffering, this degrades refugees to sub-citizen status (Hyndman, 2000), widening the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ divide (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017). Therefore, while these tweets present pro-refugee arguments, they still potentially contribute to the threat-victim dichotomy that defines refugees.

Tweets 6 and 7 demonstrate similar lexical choices, but instead use these to argue aid should be exclusively reserved for UK citizens. Prioritising vulnerable UK citizens was one of the most dominant anti-refugee arguments in the data set for both Syrian and Ukrainian refugees. For example, Tweet 6 highlights the ‘plenty of vulnerable people in this country’, and pairing the quantification ‘plenty’ and adjective ‘vulnerable’ emphasises the greater needs of UK citizens over refugees. In contrast, refugees are reduced to ‘Syria’ and ‘not our problem’. This dehumanises them to either their country or an encumbrance, lexically

suppressing refugees' own vulnerability and instead depicting them as a problem to be solved, not people to be helped.

Similarly, Tweet 7 describes how 'we need to get our own homeless off the streets and our own people into homes', while refugees are simply referred to as '#UkrainianRefugees'. The lexical emphasis on needing 'homes' highlights the vulnerability of UK citizens, in response to the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The repeated use of the first-person plural determiner 'our' additionally draws on the ideology of banal nationalism (Billig, 1995), reinforcing the 'us' versus 'them' dichotomy. Both tweets juxtapose the lexical accentuation of UK citizens' vulnerability with an absence of this for refugees, implying that helping UK citizens is the moral responsibility. Additionally, this argument contributes to the depiction of aid as a zero-sum affair (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008), in which the government is directly disadvantaging vulnerable citizens by helping refugees. These lexical choices therefore not only depict refugees as a direct economic threat, but portray the morality of aid as mutually exclusive.

These tweets highlight how similar discursive strategies can be used for both pro and anti-refugee arguments, which is repeated through the use of deontic modal verbs to assign moral responsibility. Deontic modality grammatically expresses obligation, usually with reference to morality (Charlow & Chrisman, 2016). In Tweet 6, the author argues that the 'government should help' UK citizens, and here the modal verb 'should' expresses the government's obligation to help its citizens over refugees. In contrast, Tweet 5 affirms that 'Govs, NGOs and citizens must unite to protect them'. Here, the deontic modal verb 'must' implies the necessity of working collaboratively to 'protect' refugees. Deontic modal verbs therefore attach moral evaluations to the author's argument, and were found in both pro and anti-refugee tweets.

Overall, these tweets highlight the prominence of morally-laden lexical choices within the discourse surrounding both Syrian and Ukrainian refugees, whether to support pro or anti-refugee arguments as morally right. While the literature highlights frequent references to morality in humanitarian discourse (Chouliaraki, 2010), these findings illustrate how this is also reflected in anti-refugee discourse. These further perpetuate the ambivalent representations of refugees as victims or threats, by emphasising the vulnerability of refugees or host citizens respectively.

Assigned Agency

Generally, agency refers to who can take action or control a situation. In discourse, this more specifically relates to who is speaking and the role they play, as either the subject or object of sentences (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Throughout the data set, agency was primarily illustrated through the expression of action or passivity. While the UK was presented as an active agent, both Syrian and Ukrainian refugees were presented passively, unless they were associated with negative actions.

Tweet 8: **I hope**, somehow, there will be **safeguarding** for these #UkrainianRefugees as **displaced** women and children are vulnerable for **trafficking and abuse**. **We want them to be safe** where they **stay**. I know the numbers are huge, but **does anyone know** how **s/guarding** will be done?! #Ukraine

In Tweet 8, refugees' lack of agency is presented explicitly through the author's argument that they are 'vulnerable for trafficking and abuse'. However this is also expressed more implicitly, through the grammatical assignment of refugees to a passive role, particularly in comparison to UK citizens. This is achieved through nominalisation: when verbs are transformed into their associated noun (Machin & Mayr, 2012). For example, the author describes the potential 'trafficking' and 'abuse', rather than suggesting 'X is trafficking' or 'abusing' refugees. Nominalisation therefore removes the responsibility from

who is performing these actions (Machin & Mayr, 2012). This syntactic reduction highlights refugees as victims, while lexically eliminating the perpetrators (Fowler et al., 1979). This is repeated in the need for ‘safeguarding’. Again, refugees need protection, but the nominalisation conceals who is responsible for this ‘safeguarding’, removing responsibility from the UK. Even when describing refugees, they are depicted as ‘displaced women and children’. The adjective ‘displaced’ has a similar effect as nominalisation, in which the refugees are the passive objects of this displacement, but those who have caused this are not specified. By continually grammatically removing the perpetrators, refugees are expressed as passive victims, but no one in particular is responsible for aiding them.

In contrast, the author portrays UK citizens as active agents through the use of verbs: ‘I hope’, ‘we want’, and ‘does anyone know’. These are mental processes, with CDA researchers suggesting these can evoke audience empathy, and portray the subject as active, despite the lack of actual action (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Zhang, 2017). Here, the reader may empathise with British people for their ‘hope’ and ‘want’ for refugees to be safe, without requiring them to provide material aid. While this may vicariously induce audience empathy for refugees, the grammatical strategies place all agency on UK citizens. The only time refugees are presented as the subject is when the author describes ‘where they stay’. However, ‘stay’ is an intransitive verb, as there is no object, and so this continues to perpetuate refugees as having no agentic control. Therefore, while Tweet 8 may be pro-refugee, dichotomising the agentic citizens with passive refugees contributes to the dehumanising discourse surrounding refugees.

Tweet 9: @BorisJohnson our country should be **making** #Ukrainianrefugees **welcome**, not **obstructing** them. Whatever happened to basic decency, humanity, compassion and care? #JohnsonOut39

Tweet 10: At last! Pressure from campaigners leads to UK Government **opening the door** to the most desperate #Syrianrefugees. Well done NGOs&supporters

Tweets 9 and 10 argue that the UK should accept refugees, criticising the government's approach. In addition to nominalisation, these authors assign agency through transitive verbs: positioning the UK and government as the subject, while refugees are the object. For example, Tweet 9 describes how 'our country should be making #Ukrainianrefugees welcome, not obstructing them'. By positioning 'our country' as the active agents and '#Ukrainianrefugees' as the objects, this implies how the UK controls whether they are either welcomed or obstructed, highlighting refugees' lack of agency over their future (Van Dijk, 2000). This is positioned more specifically as being controlled by Boris Johnson, then Prime Minister. By tagging '@BorisJohnson', this places the responsibility for refugees solely onto him, distancing the author from this responsibility. Similarly, Tweet 10 assigns the UK as the active agent, and refugees as objects, by describing the 'UK Government opening the door to...#Syrianrefugees'. The expression 'opening the door' is a common metaphor within the literature (Abid et al., 2017; Tavassoli et al., 2019), suggesting new beginnings for refugees once they are through 'the door', but also highlighting refugees' passivity in waiting for this. The discursive strategies in both of these tweets focus on the actions of the UK in 'making (them) welcome' and 'open(ing) the door' therefore reflecting the inequality of the relationship between refugees and the host country.

Tweet 11: It is believed **more than 5 .559 #ISIS young fighters** may have **infiltrated** the **mass #exodus** of #SyrianRefugees **welcomed** in #Europe #Revenge

In contrast, Tweet 11 depicts refugees as agents as part of the anti-refugee discourse. While the author describes refugees as being 'welcomed in #Europe', with refugees as the object, the author also reports how '#ISIS young fighters may have infiltrated'. Here, the author suggests that there are terrorists posing as refugees, contributing to the moral panic

surrounding the potential security threat of refugees. The tweet positions these ‘fighters’ as the active agents, in one of the rare examples assigning agency to the minority group. This is consistent with the literature findings that refugees and other minority groups are presented passively, unless they are associated with something negative, when their agency will be accentuated (Van Dijk, 2000). The verb ‘infiltrated’ has negative connotations, associated with being surreptitious or military conflict, another common association in discourse surrounding refugees (El Refaie, 2001; Saxton, 2003). This is exacerbated by the continued aggregation through the description of ‘more than 5 .559 #ISIS young fighters’, and ‘mass #exodus’, which makes the security threat associated with refugees appear more severe. In general, by only assigning agency surrounding negative or harmful verbs, this continues to perpetuate the dichotomy that refugees are either a dangerous threat or powerless victims. While this was demonstrated for both Syrian and Ukrainian refugees, the discourse surrounding terrorist threat was specifically associated with Syrian refugees.

In summary, the grammatical construction of UK citizens’ agency compared to refugees’ passivity further contributes to the discursive construction of refugees as helpless victims, while implicitly perpetuating the dominance of the host country. However, portraying refugees as active agents in relation to negative actions reinforces the other side of the threat-victim dichotomy in the discourse surrounding both Syrian and Ukrainian refugees.

Altogether, the findings of this analysis highlight the general similarities in the discursive strategies constructing both Syrian and Ukrainian refugees, which reflected the general similarities in the discourse. Both groups were depicted dichotomously as either a dangerous threat to the UK, or powerless victims needing protection. The only difference was in the type of threat associated with each group, as only Syrian refugees were depicted as a security threat. These findings therefore reflect the similarities in the quantitative description, yet dispute previous comparative studies (Blomberg, 2023; Carlsen & Toubøl, 2023; Viczko

& Matsumoto, 2022). The following section will discuss how these findings compare with the analysis of Twitter users' retrospective comparisons of Syrian and Ukrainian refugees.

Retrospective Comparisons

In the final section of this analysis, I will be presenting the findings for the retrospective comparisons data set. The quantitative description highlighted the largely pro-refugee discourse, while the CDA evidenced how tweets primarily criticised the bias towards Ukrainian refugees over Syrian refugees. This was constructed through racial categories, contrasting lexical choices, and grammatical comparisons.

The advanced Twitter search led to a total of 58 comparison tweets. After cleaning the data, this resulted in 54 tweets, 96% of which were pro-refugee. The dominant discourse within these tweets was that all refugees should receive the same level of acceptance as Ukrainian refugees.

Tweet 12: I wonder how many **Afghanistan, Syrian, Rwandan etc** refugees were **welcomed** to posh comfortable homes, bikes for children, school places and flowers on arrival Yet **white Ukrainian refugees**, sure #RefugeesWelcome #Refugees **#whiteRefugees #bias**

Tweet 13: #Refugees To the **90k people** who signed up to host a Ukrainian refugee but say they can't find anyone. There are refugees from **Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan, Sudan, Palestine, Iran, Iraq** already in the UK who are living in **appalling accommodation**. They are **just as traumatised**.



Tweet 14: Britain has **opened its welcoming arms** to #Ukrainian #refugees but those **dark-skinned, #Muslim** asylum seekers and refugees **fleeing similar #Russian and Assad bombings** in Syria and other wars are being **held in immigration prisons and arrested.**



These tweets reflect the general discourse throughout the retrospective comparison data set, which is that the UK's bias towards Ukrainian refugees is unfair to other refugees. It is particularly interesting to note the prevalence of this in comparison to the generally pro-refugee discourses surrounding both Syrian and Ukrainian refugees from the time of their respective crises. As these challenge the dominant government and mainstream media discourses suggesting that Ukrainian refugees are more deserving of sympathy (Blomberg, 2023; Morrice, 2022), it is important to analyse how these are discursively constructed.

Racial Categories

Generally, tweets constructed two distinct categories: Ukrainian refugees, and all other refugees. This is evidenced in Tweet 12: 'Afghanistan, Syrian, Rwandan etc refugees', compared to 'Ukrainian refugees', and Tweet 13: 'refugees from Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan, Sudan, Palestine, Iran, Iraq', and 'Ukrainian refugee(s)'. By grouping all other refugees together, this emphasises the anomalous treatment of Ukrainian refugees specifically.

Furthermore, these categories were primarily defined by race. For example, Tweet 12 specifically references 'white Ukrainian refugees' and '#whiteRefugees', lexically tying their Whiteness to their identity. In contrast, Tweet 14 describes difficulties for 'dark-skinned, #Muslim' refugees, which is further substantiated by the author's intertextual reference to a news article discussing the 'colonial racism' of humanitarianism. Both tweets therefore suggest that the treatment of refugees is dependent on their race or religion. This stance

implicitly criticises the perpetuation of racist and Islamophobic ideologies in the governmental response and mainstream media (De Coninck, 2022; Morrice, 2022).

Contrasting Lexical Choices

Many tweets within the data set used contrasting lexical choices when referring to Ukrainian refugees or those from other countries. For example, Tweet 12 uses a semantic field of geniality, describing how Ukrainian refugees were ‘welcomed to posh comfortable homes, bikes for children, school places and flowers on arrival’. Similarly, Tweet 14 uses the metaphor of how ‘Britain has opened its welcoming arms to #Ukrainian #refugees’. Tweet 13 instead quantifies the ‘90k people who signed up to host a Ukrainian refugee’, numerically substantiating this claim. These examples lexically emphasise the welcoming treatment Ukrainian refugees received through the UK’s visa schemes.

The tweets then contrast this with more distressing lexical choices referring to other groups of refugees. Tweet 14 describes how these refugees ‘are being held in immigration prisons and arrested’, while Tweet 13 highlights how they ‘are living in appalling accommodation’. Specifically overlexicalising other refugees’ adverse living situations directly contrasts the Homes for Ukraine scheme, emphasising the UK’s supposed bias.

Grammatical Comparisons

Throughout the data set, many tweets drew on similarities between all refugees. These comparisons were established in the authors’ arguments, but also in the discursive strategies they employed. For example, Tweet 13 describes how other refugees ‘are just as traumatised’ as Ukrainian refugees. Here, the adverb ‘just’ directly compares the two groups, emphasising the trauma facing all refugees. The incorporated image further reinforces this, depicting refugee children and stating that ‘seeking safety is not a crime’. Again, this highlights that all refugees are simply ‘seeking safety’, demonstrating the parallels between Ukrainian and other refugees. Likewise, Tweet 14 states: ‘but those...refugees fleeing similar #Russian and Assad

bombings in Syria and other wars'. The author explicitly highlights how 'similar' the 'bombings' are for both groups of refugees, while the conjunction 'but' emphasises the contrasting responses to these. Juxtaposing refugees' similarities with these grammatical comparisons substantiates the allegations and unfairness of the UK's biased response.

In summary, the tweets in the retrospective comparison data set predominantly criticised the alleged bias towards Ukrainian refugees, challenging the dominant discourses. Notably, this contrasts with the findings from the original data set, which evidenced very similar discourses surrounding both Syrian and Ukrainian refugees at the height of their respective crises. Therefore, it is important to theorise why retrospective accounts are so conflicting with the findings from the time, which will be explored in the final discussion chapter.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore how Syrian and Ukrainian refugees are discursively constructed on Twitter in the UK, and whether there were any differences in these discourses. The online discourse was found to be extremely similar for both groups at the time of the respective refugee crises. However, retrospective Twitter accounts criticising the UK's supposed bias towards Ukrainian refugees did not reflect these similarities.

The quantitative description highlighted how the proportions of pro and anti-refugee tweets were almost identical, with predominantly pro-refugee sentiments for both groups. These similarities do not reflect previous comparative literature, which highlights positive discourses surrounding Ukrainian refugees while other refugees were depicted more negatively (Blomberg, 2023; Carlsen & Toubøl, 2023). The overwhelmingly pro-refugee discourse towards Syrian refugees may be due to the dates the tweets were collected. The first date was when Syrian refugees were initially accepted into the UK. As this was before the denoted refugee crisis in 2015 (Goodman et al., 2017), UK citizens may have been more

sympathetic towards Syrian refugees' plight, rather than concerned about the supposed threat they posed. While the second date in September 2015 was during the height of this crisis, it was not long after the photographs of Alan Kurdi were published. The literature has highlighted how this period was characterised by an outpouring of solidarity with Syrian refugees on social media (Sajir & Aouragh, 2019; Thomas et al., 2018). Therefore, these dates may have been at times where the discourse towards Syrian refugees was particularly pro-refugee.

In comparison, the discourse for Ukrainian refugees became notably less pro-refugee on the second date, when the Homes for Ukraine scheme was introduced. By placing the rehoming responsibility onto UK citizens rather than the government, this may have stimulated a greater sense of threat, explaining the increase in anti-refugee sentiments.

These general proportional similarities were reflected discursively, with Syrian and Ukrainian refugees both constructed as either threats or victims. While previous literature has evidenced the dominant portrayal of refugees as a threat on social media (Bozdağ, 2020; Erdogan-Ozturk & Isik-Guler, 2020; Kreis 2017), the predominance of pro-refugee tweets caused this dichotomy to gravitate more towards representations of refugees as victims. In terms of discursive strategies, this was predominantly established through categorisation, lexical choices referencing morality, and the grammatical assignment of agency. There was a slight difference regarding the form of threat associated with these groups: both were frequently associated with economic threat; however only Syrian refugees were affiliated with security threat. This portrayal perpetuates Islamophobic ideologies, reflecting previous literature findings (Abbas, 2019; Ogude, 2022). However, as both groups were depicted on this threat-victim dichotomy, the findings indicated that there were no overarching differences in the discourses and discursive strategies surrounding Syrian and Ukrainian refugees.

Despite appearing antithetical, the portrayal of refugees as threats or victims both contribute to the dehumanisation of refugees, reducing them to either danger or suffering and portraying them as something less than host citizens (Chouliaraki & Stolic, 2017). The construction of refugees on this threat-victim dichotomy was used to highlight the generosity and pity of the UK, perpetuating the ideological square and highlighting the role of Western power in humanitarianism (Axster, 2023; Van Dijk, 1997b). It is therefore important for future research to investigate how both pro and anti-refugee online discourses can perpetuate the inequality refugees face, and how to produce humanising discourses that challenge this.

Interestingly, the discourse from the retrospective tweets was largely critical of the UK's seemingly favourable response to Ukrainian refugees compared to other groups of refugees. This does not reflect the almost equally positive depictions of Syrian and Ukrainian refugees at the time of their respective crises. The incongruence between these findings may be explained by the passage of time since the Syrian refugee crisis. By witnessing the overwhelmingly positive response to Ukrainian refugees (Blomberg, 2023; Morrice, 2022), users may have remembered the UK's response to Syrian refugees as less positive.

Alternatively, users may have remembered the online discourse as more negative towards Syrian refugees due to algorithmic manipulation. The Twitter algorithm is designed to promote tweets with higher levels of engagement (Bandy & Diakopoulos, 2021), and therefore polarising content that generates more debate is more visible on the platform. As such, anti-refugee tweets regarding Syrian refugees may have been more engaged with at the time and therefore appeared more prevalent than they were. Furthermore, by users engaging with anti-refugee tweets, even if to argue, the algorithm exposes them to more anti-refugee tweets (Baptista & Gradim, 2021). As a result, further research should investigate how online discourse is shaped by social media algorithms and users, in turn defining our social reality, including power relations and inequality (Bouvier & Machin, 2018).

Limitations and Further Research

Some of the limitations of the present study regard the data collection process. One limitation is that the original data set only represented two days' worth of tweets for each group. Despite this being a recommended data collection method for Twitter (Page et al., 2014), this provides a limited insight into the online discourse surrounding Syrian and Ukrainian refugees. Having established the potential influence of these dates on the findings, future research may benefit from a longitudinal analysis into whether the overwhelmingly pro-refugee discourses were maintained, or resulted in compassion fatigue as previously demonstrated (Thomas et al., 2018).

The present study was also restricted to the UK context. Due to the importance of context within discourse (Wodak, 2011a), future research may benefit from continuing this investigation in other national contexts. As one of the arguments surrounding the preferential treatment of Ukrainian refugees is their proximity to European countries (Carlsen & Toubøl, 2023), it may be insightful to investigate how countries geographically closer to Syria discursively construct the two groups. Not only would this allow for further exploration into the online discourse surrounding refugees, it may aid in a greater understanding of how the intergroup boundaries between refugees and host citizens vary with the national context.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has provided an exploration into the Twitter discourse surrounding Syrian and Ukrainian refugees in the UK. CDA provided an insightful theoretical framework and method of analysis for examining how these discourses contribute to the inequality facing refugees. The discourses surrounding both Syrian and Ukrainian refugees were largely similar, with both exhibiting predominantly pro-refugee tweets. The CDA highlighted how these similarities were reflected in the discursive strategies used. These constructed a dichotomy portraying both Syrian and Ukrainian refugees as either a

threat to the UK, or as victims for support. Both depictions arguably perpetuate the dehumanisation and societal inequality of refugees. However, when analysing retrospective Twitter comparisons between Syrian and Ukrainian refugees, the discourse primarily criticised the perceived bias towards Ukrainian refugees in the UK. The contradictions between these critical retrospective tweets and the primarily pro-refugee tweets from the time of the respective crises raise some interesting questions into how online discourses are shaped. The present study highlights the dialectical relationship between online discourse and our social reality, shaping our representations and recollections of refugees, and contributing to the inequality between refugees and their host country.

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Appendix A

Sample Data Set with Coding

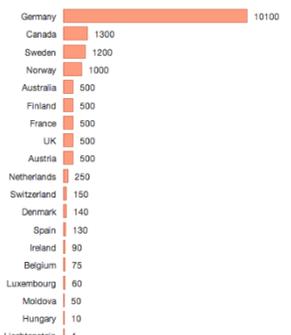
Quote	UK justification if necessary	Pro/Anti?	Reasoning?
Why did it take so long? #syrianrefugees	Journalist based in London	Pro	Lack of government support Moral choice
The principle to resettle some of the most vulnerable #Syrianrefugees temporarily in the UK will transform their lives, a welcome gesture.		Pro	UK should be helping the vulnerable Moral choice
UK now taking 500 #syrianrefugees - same as Australia but the UK has 3x the popn. New Zealand is taking zero - ∞ less than others.		Pro	Comparison between countries as who can should take the most
#syrianrefugees UK Gov accepts 30,000 to come to UK. All to have passports and benefits ? This must end VOTE UKIP		Anti	Refugees taking resources Resource threat
There are plenty of vulnerable people in this country that government should help Syria is not our problem @Daybreak #syrianrefugees	Based in UK	Anti	Use of resources should go to British people not refugees Resource threat
47% Britains against Syrian refugees arriving in our country Shocking stat #syrianrefugees		Pro	British people should be more pro Divide?
The #UK confirms that it will be providing refuge to some of the most vulnerable #syrianrefugees #Syria http://bit.ly/1evJD2f @nick_clegg		NA	News report
The #UK confirms that it will be providing refuge to some of the most vulnerable #syrianrefugees #Syria http://bit.ly/1evJD2f		NA	News report
The #UK confirms that it will be providing refuge to some of the most vulnerable #syrianrefugees #Syria http://bit.ly/1evJD2f		NA	News report
The #UK confirms that it will be providing refuge to some of the most vulnerable #syrianrefugees #Syria http://bit.ly/1evJD2f		NA	News report
UK to take 'hundreds' of Syrian refugees - actions shouldn't be about statistics but need, about compassion not Elections. #syrianrefugees		Pro	UK should approach refugees more humanitarially Moral choice
Well done @Mark_J_Harper		Anti	Those mentioned proposing resettling refugees within Syria and neighbouring countries, not in UK Policy over moral choice

@JBrokenshire @ukhomeoffice sensible application of policy on resettlement of #syrianrefugees			Lack of compassion
Stunned #syrianrefugees @David_Cameron your bringing the conflict to our country .moral obligation you say .keep these syrians out !		Anti	Taking in refugees will lead to conflict Threat
The #UK to provide refuge to vulnerable #SyrianRefugees http://ow.ly/t3CQh #Syria		NA	News report
@MENAPost #UK to resettle temporarily some of #Syria refugees, Nick Clegg said #syrianrefugees http://bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-25934659		NA	News report
@UNHCRUK @ so proud to hear the report on the #SyrianRefugees this morning. Good work everyone!		Pro	UK should be helping refugees Moral choice
#UK2resettle #SyrianRefugees #CleggYaCunt our nation is bad enough without more freeloaders! Wit wud happen if it was the other way round?		Anti	Refugees will take away resources Resource threat
How are the #Syrianrefugees going to get here? Government announcing it like they can just hop on the tube and turn up?	Tube reference	Pro	UK government should offer more help
Britain is the only country that helps everyone else out but can't look after itself! #syrianrefugees		Anti	UK should focus on helping citizens Threat? Resource?
RT " @JRSEurope : #Syrian #refugees by James Nachtwey http://ti.me/1mVYrvL #syrianrefugees "	UK based organisation	Pro	Pro refugee organisation – link to photographs Vulnerability of refugees
@BBCr4today Easy to give money and be smug, hard to welcome real people in dire need. Basic humanity. #syrianrefugees		Pro	Criticism of lack of compassion to refugees Moral choice
#bbcbreakfast How selfish. Bring #syrianrefugees to show how generous UK govt and charities are rather than resettle nearer their homeland.		Anti	Not UK responsibility UK using refugees as symbol
Good start to an otherwise rainy Weds morning #Syrianrefugees #UNHCR #CoalitionGovt		Pro	UK responsibility to help refugees

We are still doing this 'women and children' saved first thing. Children yes, but why are we prioritising women over men. #syrianrefugees		Pro	UK should be offering universal help to all refugees
UK to resettle vulnerable Syria refugees, Nick Clegg confirms http://onlinepublishingcompany.info/content/read_more/complexInfobox/site_news/infobox/elements/template/default/active_id/9308... #Syrianrefugees #Amnesty		NA	News report
Girls & women who had been victims of or were at risk of sexual violence & torture victims would get priority #Syrianrefugees allowed to UK		Pro	UK should help the vulnerable
How the hell do you choose which #SyrianRefugees are the most #needy . All the poor souls are #desperate	Based in UK	Pro	UK should be offering universal help to all refugees Moral choice
Welcome that UK will take in #Syrianrefugees . Must not forget the needs of millions in the region. Photo @edkashi 		Pro	UK should help those in need Moral choice
UK decision to offer refuge to #Syrianrefugees is a concrete&important gesture of solidarity&burden sharing http://goo.gl/V1kspn @UNHCRUK		Pro	UK should be humanitarian Moral choice
While #Germany takes 1000's ?500 of most vulnerable #syrianrefugees to be let into #Britain due to fear of #UKip ? http://independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/government-to-allow-500-syrian-refugees-into-britain-9091845.html		Pro	UK should be doing more to help UK not doing enough due to government fear-mongering? Comparison
The number "should be thousands not hundreds" - Britain to take up to 500 #SyrianRefugees		Pro	UK should be doing more
#Syrianrefugees : Labour to press government to accept UN programme' via @guardian http://bit.ly/1e6N0lm		NA	News report

<p>UK will let in 'hundreds' of the "most vulnerable" #SyrianRefugees Are we really able to select our refugees? #r2vine</p> 		NA	News report
<p>This afternoon MPs to debate two subjects chosen by the Opposition: #Syrianrefugees and #teachingquality. More info: http://goo.gl/qWQgNI</p>		NA	Debate
<p>@BBCRadio2 Elderly gentleman on radio right now is making me cry. What a kind, inspiring man #SyrianRefugees</p>		Pro	Humanising
<p>This afternoon UKMPs to debate two subjects chosen by the Opposition: #Syrianrefugees and #teachingquality. More: http://goo.gl/qWQgNI</p>		NA	Debate
<p>UK gov scheme will run in addition to Gateway programme and the mandate resettlement scheme #SyrianRefugees</p>		Pro	Highlighting how the UK is helping
<p>September 1914: Britain gave refuge to 250,000 Belgian refugees. Shame on our modern politicians for grudging offer to #Syrianrefugees.</p>		Pro	UK not offering universal help, should be doing more Moral choice
<p>UK #syrianrefugees scheme to work with UNHCR - but essentially can veto refugees UNHCR puts forward. Backdoor quota or am I being paranoid?</p>		Pro	Lack of trust in UK government
<p>Theresa May's oral statement to the Commons on the government's proposal to relocate #syrianrefugees http://bit.ly/Mfm4nA</p>		NA	Political statement
<p>W.U.A. is coming in Manchester and Leicester this april #syrianrefugees#Help http://wua.org.uk</p>		Pro	NGOs helping refugees in UK
<p>Question by MP in House of Commons - why does UK have so little ambition in terms of resettling #syrianrefugees compared to others in EU</p>		Pro	UK not doing enough compared to others Comparison
<p>Keeping Syria's children warm in a blanket distribution #syrianrefugees http://wua.org.uk</p>	UK organisation	Pro	NGOs helping refugees in UK

				
<p>Theresa May - voluntary sector will play very important role to play - because quality of support they provide. #syrianrefugees</p>		Pro	NGOs helping refugees in UK	
<p>The Right Honourable Sir Gerald Kaufman states that helping refugees make a life-long difference. #syrianrefugees</p>		Pro	Life changing impact of helping Moral choice	
<p>Great initiative from #UK to resettle 500 of most vulnerable #syrianrefugees who were not so vulnerable before #assad destroys their country</p>		Pro	Highlight why they're refugees – helping the vulnerable	
<p>Before the 'revolution' there were no #syrianrefugees no #islamic fuckwits from bumfuck #SaudiArabia but thanks to morons look at it now.</p>	Based in UK	Anti	Not UK responsibility Cultural difference	
<p>Where is #Russia's offer of places for #Syrianrefugees?</p>	Based in UK	Anti	Other countries should be helping Comparison	
<p>The United Kingdom will offer Syrian refugees #asylum http://bit.ly/1iLifVg #Syria #SyrianRefugees</p>		NA	News report	
<p>Prosecution success rate of sex crime in the UK is less than 10% convicted. How will we define such victims amongst #syrianrefugees Hmmmm?</p>		Pro	UK won't be able to determine vulnerability System rigged against	
<p>On the day #UK has changed tack on #syrianrefugees it is worth remembering that Britain takes in fewer than 2% of the world's asylum seekers</p>		Pro	UK should be doing more Comparison	
<p>@mehdirhasan u know I love respect u bro, kinda agree @sunny_hundal we need2 intervene humanitarian situation crisis point #syrianrefugees</p>	Based in UK	Pro	Need to help those in need Moral choice	
<p>UNHCR tells #BBC Global that its goal for 2014 is to see 30,000 Syrian refugees re-settled #syrianrefugees</p>	Based in UK	Pro	Aiming to help more	
<p>UK to accept #syrianrefugees this is A Good Thing but would it be happening if #nigelfarage and #UKIP hadn't suggested it?</p>		Pro	Only happening because of UKIP Lack of trust in UK gov	

<p>At last! Pressure from campaigners leads to UK Government opening the door to the most desperate #Syrianrefugees. Well done NGOs&supporters</p>		Pro	UK not doing enough NGOs helping refugees Moral choice																																								
<p>UK to Take in "Most Vulnerable" Syrian Refugees - http://goo.gl/xNMON7 #PositiveNews #SyrianRefugees</p> 		NA	News report																																								
<p>Appalled at UK Govt's position on #syrianrefugees limits only in place to keep #tory voters happy. Shameful day for UK</p>		Pro	UK should be doing more Gov prioritising citizens over refugees Moral choice																																								
<p>Now #UK accepting #SyrianRefugees #Israel has taken NONE. http://syrianrefugees.eu/?page_id=83 And nobody bats an eyelid. Nice 1 #Israelis Keep it Jewish</p>		Pro	UK doing more than other countries Comparison																																								
<p>Dear "but we've no room"-ers, the #syrianrefugees won't be staying in YOUR house while you're begrudging them short-term respite in the UK.</p>		Pro	Not a threat – not directly impacting citizens Moral choice																																								
<p>NZ a notable absence amongst 19 nations resettling #syrianrefugees from: http://theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/jan/29/where-are-the-</p> <p>Number of places offered to Syrian refugees</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Country</th> <th>Number of places offered</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Germany</td><td>10100</td></tr> <tr><td>Canada</td><td>1300</td></tr> <tr><td>Sweden</td><td>1200</td></tr> <tr><td>Norway</td><td>1000</td></tr> <tr><td>Australia</td><td>500</td></tr> <tr><td>Finland</td><td>500</td></tr> <tr><td>France</td><td>500</td></tr> <tr><td>UK</td><td>500</td></tr> <tr><td>Austria</td><td>500</td></tr> <tr><td>Netherlands</td><td>250</td></tr> <tr><td>Switzerland</td><td>150</td></tr> <tr><td>Denmark</td><td>140</td></tr> <tr><td>Spain</td><td>130</td></tr> <tr><td>Ireland</td><td>90</td></tr> <tr><td>Belgium</td><td>75</td></tr> <tr><td>Luxembourg</td><td>60</td></tr> <tr><td>Moldova</td><td>50</td></tr> <tr><td>Hungary</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>Liechtenstein</td><td>4</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>syrian-refugees-going</p>	Country	Number of places offered	Germany	10100	Canada	1300	Sweden	1200	Norway	1000	Australia	500	Finland	500	France	500	UK	500	Austria	500	Netherlands	250	Switzerland	150	Denmark	140	Spain	130	Ireland	90	Belgium	75	Luxembourg	60	Moldova	50	Hungary	10	Liechtenstein	4		Pro	UK doing more Comparison
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<p>Hi everyone. What do you think of today's government announcement about letting more #syrianrefugees into the UK? Tweet us your thoughts</p>		NA	Gov announcement																																								

2 million refugees, and the UK, 8th richest country in the world offers to take....500. #depressed #syrianrefugees		Pro	UK should be doing more Comparison
@RefugeeAction UK is meant to be world leader & set an example yet 20+ countries opened up their borders to #syrianrefugees before us.		Pro	UK should be doing more Comparison
@StephieGilley @SeanGChappelleM How many #Syrianrefugees are Israel proposing to take? I haven't heard on the news.	Based in UK	Pro	Not just UK responsibility Comparison
@SeanGChappelleM It's important that no country ignores #Syrianrefugees . Important for world peace too.	Based in UK	Pro	Not just UK responsibility Comparison
Really important doc abt #Syrianrefugees . We can't let humans be treated this way. #opentheborderstorefugees http://youtu.be/CpB3zDlxApY	Based in UK	Pro	Moral choice to help other humans
@latimes UK Offers Asylum to Syrian refugees. http://bit.ly/1fxxADD https://pic.twitter.com/EWJ9sJzDey #syrianrefugees 		NA	News report
My daughter sleeps next to me. I'M SO LUCKY. If we fell asleep in #Syria we could never wake up again.. #syrianrefugees @FreeingSyria	Based in UK	Pro	Vulnerability of people in Syria

Appendix B

Sample Critical Discourse Analysis

There are plenty of vulnerable people in this country that government should help Syria is not our problem
[@Daybreak](#)
[#syrianrefugees](#)

Anti – refugees threat to resources

- ‘Plenty’ – lack of specific figures, make it seem like an abundance
- ‘Vulnerable’ compared to ‘not our problem’ – who is the UK’s responsibility. Vulnerable is also not specific e.g. homeless, so uncertain who they are referring to. Also draws on humanising language for those ‘vulnerable people in this country’ compared to general dehumanising term of ‘Syria’, highlighting why British people should be the priority.
- ‘Our’, ‘this country’ – banal nationalism
- ‘Problem’ suggests the refugees are the problem, rather than the result of the war
- ‘Should’ normative language – helping British people is a moral imperative but helping Syrian refugees is not.
- ‘Help’ transitive verb – the gov are the actors but should direct this help to the vulnerable, not to Syria.

Albert Einstein was a refugee when he fled to England from Nazi. He was also an immigrant when he left England to move to US. But why he left England? The UK GOVT gave the appearance of helping the Jews refugees while not caring at all. Sounds familiar? [#UkrainianRefugees](#)

The image shows three news articles side-by-side. The leftmost article is from the Daily Mail, titled 'Albert Einstein's immigration papers turn up 80 years after he fled to Britain from Nazi Germany'. The middle article is from 'The IRC in Europe' with the title '#RefugeesWelcome Albert Einstein's legacy as a refugee'. The rightmost article is from 'INDEPENDENT' with the title 'No wonder Einstein chose the US over Britain'. The right article includes a quote from Neville Chamberlain in 1939: "No doubt Jews arent (sic) a lovable people; I don't care about them myself; but that is not sufficient to explain the pogrom."

Pro – should be UK responsibility, refugees as victims

- Highlighting positive representative of refugees through a famous person who provided resources to society.
- ‘Fled’ – verb with connotations of danger (common for refugees – Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008), and urgency, validating their plight. Intransitive verb – lack of agency.
- Rhetorical question ‘But why he left England?’ highlights that he did not want to leave England but was forced to by the lack of government support.
- By referring to ‘UK GOVT’, the author directly conflates the gov at the time with the gov now, and how nothing has changed, to fit their argument.
- Directly comparing ‘Jews refugees’ from Nazis to Ukrainian refugees again validates their plight by comparing to a historical suffering. This is then compared to the UK

gov 'not caring at all' with the humanitarian connotations of care suggesting this should be the moral response, with the addition of the adverb 'at all' highlighting the extremity of their position and complete lack of help from the gov.

- The final rhetorical question 'Sounds familiar? #UkrainianRefugees' then clarifies why the author has been making this argument. By positioning this at the end of the tweet, readers have understood and potentially empathised with Einstein's experience as a refugee, and they are then reminded of the category of Ukrainian refugees.