

Language, Conflict, and the Shifting Narratives of Migration on Social Media

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Abstract

This study examines how migrants on social media construct narratives of displacement and conflict. Employing a qualitative approach, it uses hashtags (#) related to migration, conflict, and identity to collect textual data from relevant online posts and comments. Through thematic analysis informed by Narrative Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the research investigates the lexico-semantic choices, recurring phrases, and narrative structures employed by migrants in expressing the impact of conflict on their sense of self and belonging. The study engages with CDA to examine how individual narratives reflect, challenge, or perpetuate dominant societal discourses surrounding migration. It aims to project the complex and often untold experiences of migrants, highlighting the transformative impact of migration on both individual and group narratives of identity. Additionally, the study examines the prospective of social media platforms as spaces where individuals can counter existing hegemonic narratives around migration and conflict. This research contributes to the understanding of how migrants negotiate their sense of self amidst adversity and how digital platforms become spaces for expression and (re)connection. Furthermore, this research has significant implications for migration studies and policy-making: the findings can inform policymakers about the lived experiences and challenges faced by migrant populations. Understanding these narratives can lead to more empathetic and informed policy responses, fostering an environment that recognizes the intricacies of migration issues. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of integrating migrant voices into policy discussions, ensuring that strategies are effective and reflective of the diverse realities of those affected by migration.

Keywords: migration, conflict, identity, social media, narrative analysis

1. Introduction

Migration is a complex, longstanding phenomenon deeply intertwined with conflict, poverty, and economic instability around the world (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA], 2019). An estimated 272 million people today live outside their country of birth, a number that continues rising amidst persistent armed conflict, natural disasters exacerbated by climate change, and widening economic disparities between regions (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2020). Despite migration's global prevalence and impacts, the voices and experiences of migrants themselves have long been excluded from dominant policy and media narratives which often frame them as a threat or problem to be managed (Adams, 2016; den Heijer et al., 2016; Harrell-Bond & Voutira, 2007).

As social networking platforms emerge as venues for self-expression and community formation, migrants increasingly utilize these digital spaces to share first-hand accounts countering such oversimplified portrayals (García-Sánchez, 2018; Skrbiš et al., 2013). Through hashtags relating to topics like displacement, advocacy, and cultural identity, social media users construct polyvocal narratives shaping understandings of what it means to flee conflict and rebuild lives amid transition (Arnaut et al., 2016; Collyer & King, 2015; Dekker et al., 2018). However, little research to date has examined the discursive practices and narrative structures employed by migrants themselves on these platforms (Georgiou & Zaborowski, 2017; Mitchell, 2018). This study aims to address this gap by qualitatively analysing relevant Twitter and Facebook posts and comments using hashtags related to migration, conflict, and identity reconstruction. Through the theoretical frameworks of Narrative Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis, it examines the linguistic choices, recurring themes, and narrative formats used by migrants in sharing their experiences. The research seeks to illuminate how individual narratives circulated on social media both reflect and challenge hegemonic conceptions of conflict-induced migration, and how digital spaces emerge as venues for affirming migrant

subjectivities and countering erasure from dominant migration narratives.

2. Literature Review

Social media has undeniably become a global forum for interpersonal discourse and self-portrayal. Sites like Twitter and Facebook facilitate networking, expression, and community-building amongst their vast user bases. As conceptualized by Gergen (2000), social media platforms facilitate perpetual performance of the fragmented postmodern self through curated self-narratives. Scholarship increasingly acknowledges these digital spaces as Foucauldian “panopticons” wherein users meticulously craft portrayals aware they are viewed, and view others, enabling exhibitionist self-surveillance (Andrejevic, 2005; Boyd, 2011; Marwick, 2013). Recent work also stresses affordances for collective “networked narrative” storytelling through communal hashtags and timelines (Page, 2012; Lingel & Naaman, 2018). At the same time, factors such as the prominence given to migration by different types of media and the nature of the discourse can influence public attitudes and whether migration is perceived as a crisis, which in turn affects support for populist right-wing parties (Strymbek et al., 2020; Lecheler et al., 2022; Berlo, M., & Boomgaarden, H. (2019).

Migration induces drastic changes to daily lived experiences and social milieus, necessitating narrative reconstruction (McAdams, 1993). Scholars thus recognize life stories as mediums for grappling with flux (Audet & d'Amours, 2011; Ponzanesi & Leurs, 2014). However, Georgiou and Zaborowski (2017) note research to date privileges memoir/interview data rather than “naturally occurring migrant digital narratives.” Dekker et al.'s (2018) rare social media-based study focuses more on linguistic community-building than discursive identity performance.

3. Theoretical Framework

This research applies an integrated CDA-Narrative Theory framework to qualitatively analyze Twitter narratives. Narrative

Theory unloads self-identity as culturally and socially constructed through selective recollection and “emplotment” of experiences across one's lifespan (Riessman, 2008; Somers, 1994). Bruner (1991) conceptualizes narratives as enabling order-imposition on disorder through schematic structuring of events. Narrative Theory facilitates examination of selected details, sequencing, framing and embedding of subplots evident in migrant users' digital life stories. CDA reveals power differentials perpetuated or challenged through narrative choices relating to representations of groups, logical connections, claims to legitimacy and modality (Foucault, 1972, 1980; van Leeuwen, 2008). Such a multidisciplinary approach elucidates socioculturally negotiated self-crafting online. CDA further examines how stories reflect and shape ideology by uncovering discursive strategies that reinforce or contest dominant conceptualizations embedded in public discourse (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 1997; Wodak & Meyer, 2015).

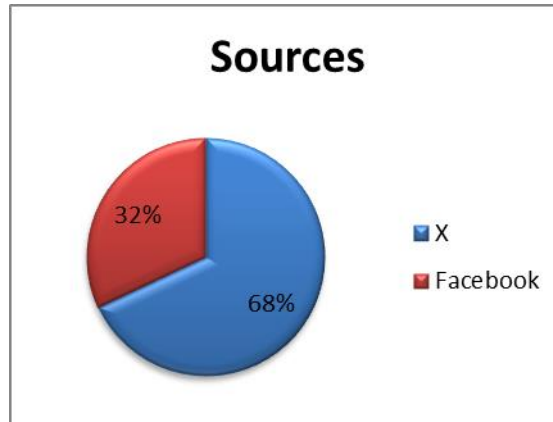
4. Methodology

This study administered a virtual ethnographic methodology to collect naturally-occurring narrative data from social media. As the research aimed to understand identity construction through digital self-expression, Twitter (X) and Facebook were selected as the data sources due their affordances for sustained first-person storytelling via public tweets, posts, replies and threads (Boyd et al., 2010; Marwick & Boyd, 2011). This involved establishing clear criteria based on relevance, engagement metrics, and the diversity of perspectives represented in the posts. Furthermore, while the findings primarily focus on Twitter and Facebook, they offer encompass insights that can be extrapolated to other social media platforms, given the shared characteristics of user-generated content across these environments. To identify hashtags germane to migration, conflict and cultural negotiation experiences, the researcher conducted a close reading of relevant academic literature as well as a discourse analysis of leading news publications on human mobility. A list of 40 hashtags (#) was thus compiled relating to topics such as displacement, transnational advocacy, and remembrance of home.

Using the automated web-scraping software Mention and the manual collection of hashtags, all original tweets and posts in English between the 1st of January 2024 and the 25th of March 2024 containing the selected hashtags were captured. Posts authored by accounts explicitly identifying as migrants through biographical statements or geo-location markers and those following threads on migrant narratives were extracted to inform an emic perspective. For qualitative interpretation, this resulted in a final dataset of 2000 mentions across Twitter and Facebook, with 1,360 mentions (68%) on Twitter and 640 mentions (32%) on Facebook. The collected posts and screenshots were encoded to facilitate systematic mixed methods analysis focused on coding and retrieval. An inductive thematic analysis approach was adopted to identify salient themes within the language use and narrative structures present across the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Initial open coding of the full dataset generated 40 descriptive concepts which were then grouped into overarching themes using an affinity mapping process (Gautreau and Bin, 2011). This process followed ethical considerations by withholding the identities of the narrators.

5. Findings

A total of 2,000 mentions were captured from both networks over the specified timeframe. Upon further breakdown, it was shown that the microblogging site Twitter hosted the majority (68%) of discussions, amounting to 1,360 posts. Meanwhile, the remaining 32% of dialogue took place on the social networking platform Facebook, consisting of 640 mentions.

Table 1: Data Sources

This preliminary quantitative audit serves as a mirror to the comparative volume and spread of online discourse around migration-related topics amongst these digital spaces. The hashtag with the highest number of uses was #migrationcrisis with 250 mentions while the hashtag with the lowest number of uses was #lostinvocabulary with only 10 mentions.

5.1 Sentiments Analysis

Sentiment analysis refers to the use of natural language processing techniques to identify, extract, quantify and study affective states and subjective information expressed in written communication systematically. It has emerged as a powerful approach for understanding emotional tones, perspectives and implied ideologies present in various forms of discourse. Automated methods are increasingly able to detect not only explicit emotional terms but implicit attitudes as well by looking at related words, punctuation usage and other subtle linguistic signals. Here, negative and positive identity markers along shifting narratives were identified.

5.1.1 Negative Identity Markers

The sentiment analysis revealed several frequently occurring negative identity markers used in discussing migrants on social media.

A post discusses how “Nearly 4.8 million people in the #Sahel have recently been forced to flee their homes. Mali and other countries in the Sahel are under strain from forced #displacement and require urgent support to avert crisis...” This directly quotes the challenging situation faced by those displaced.

Language as a Barrier: Posts frequently depict migrants as outsiders due to language skills. One Twitter user states “We import 70 and 80 year olds from Somalia just to put on welfare. I’ve seen dozens of them.” It emphasises the elderly Somalis as non-English speakers who rely on welfare.

Criminalization: Migrants are often labelled as threats. One post declares “Criminal, uneducated, non-English speaking, resource taking, health care clogging, affordable housing thieves, cartel enriching, migrants! I know it is a mouth full, but let’s call it what it is! #globalcitizenship”. This paints all migrants with criminal terms.

Dehumanization: Terms like “Population surge to a record high in #London and the impact of #migration across #UK is all to see in #education #benefits #NHS #housing #dentists #identitycrisis this is why hardworking #taxpayers are upset!” Depict migrants as burdens on public services rather than human beings deserving of dignity.

Positive Identity Markers

References to rights, justice and welcome notes emphasised protection and inclusion. Together, these opposing lexical features revealed the complexity of identity negotiations and competing discourses at play in online discussions.

Seeking Refuge: One refugee powerfully shares “I vividly recall moments when my inability to express myself in English prevented me from communicating my urgent needs. It was an isolating and dehumanizing experience.” #identitycrisis. It highlights the difficulties faced in fleeing danger.

Economic Contribution: A post affirms the work ethic of migrants: “I worked with many undocumented workers during my 25 year career in Homebuilding! YOU will never find a harder, faster & more conscientious worker!” #refugeesupport

Cultural Exchange: One user discusses hosting “a refugee family for a year - best experience of our lives. These are just regular people who want safety & a better life for kids. Our family

remains close 5 years on.” Emphasizing the cultural values of integration. #refugeesupport

Shifting Narratives

Sentiment also varied within individual narratives depending on whether a crisis or solidarity frame dominated. Emotive stories spotlighting hardships served to sentimentalize migrant suffering and stir compassion. In contrast, factual reports maintained an objective distance without deeply examining root causes or policy impacts. How viewpoints and emotions were directly represented, backgrounded or omitted shaped audience interpretations and challenges to the status quo.

“Crisis” vs. “Support”: Posts depict contradictory narratives - one emphasizes migrants as “Criminal, uneducated, non-English speaking, resource taking...” whilst another asserts “#AsylumSeeker is NOT a crime!” Advocating compassion.

Selective Empathy: A comment highlights differing responses to migrants: “Rightttt and we know why that’s been the case with Ukrainian migration but not with people from South America.” Drawing attention to origin-based bias.

Table 2: Sentiments Analysis

Category	Subcategory	Description
Negative Identity Markers	<i>Language as a Barrier</i>	Posts emphasize non-English language skills as excluding migrants
	<i>Criminalization</i>	Migrants portrayed as 'illegal' or threatening to safety
	<i>Dehumanization</i>	Migrants referred to in impersonal/burdensome terms like 'surge'
Positive Identity Markers	<i>Seeking Refuge</i>	Acknowledging hardships and right to seek asylum
	<i>Economic Contribution</i>	Highlighting work ethic and value migrants provide
	<i>Cultural Exchange</i>	Focusing on cultural learning through integration

Shifting Narratives	<i>“Crisis” “Support”</i> vs	Conflicting frames of migrants as crisis or deserving assistance
	<i>Selective Empathy</i>	Different responses based on migrants' country of origin

The table shows that negative identity markers broadly emphasize exclusive, threatening, or dehumanizing associations with migrants, while positive identity markers focus on seeking safety, contributions, and cultural learning through integration. Finally, shifting narratives capture contradictory “crisis” versus “support” perspectives, as well as biases in levels of empathy displayed.

5.2 Lexical choices on Migration, Conflict and Language

In examining lexical choices related to language and conflict, various narratives emerge that reflect societal attitudes towards identity, policy debates, economics, integration, cultural/national pride, sovereignty/borders, and cultural change/loss. These narratives are rich in linguistic flares that convey a spectrum of emotions, from expressions of pride to concerns over perceived threats and changes. The diverse range of lexical choices used in these contexts highlights the polygonal nature of language as a tool for expressing beliefs, values, and concerns within the broader discourse on societal challenges and transformations.

5.2.1 Lexical choices related to Identity

Through carefully selected words and phrases, individuals express their beliefs, concerns, and perceptions, shaping narratives that reflect the complexities of personal and collective identities in the context of language and conflict. For instance, the data displayed the following:

“Wow. The Supreme Court just did a 180 and ruled that Texas is allowed to enforce SB 4, allowing state police to arrest and deport illegal aliens.” This expresses concerns over loss of control of borders and sovereignty.

“Population surge to a record high in #London and the impact of #migration across #UK is all to see in #education #benefits #NHS#housing #dentists - this is why hardworking #taxpayers

are upset!” Critiques perceived impact on public services and cultural changes.

“Why any #AsylumSeeker would want to come to USA baffles me. The country is fcuked and going backwards fast.” It communicates disillusionment with national direction.

“I arrived in this country a refugee born in Burundi. My family is from Rwanda tho. I came here when I could barely speak any language let alone English. Raised here, lived, loved and will have wee Scottish bairns.” Here, emphasis is on positive integration and contributions.

5.2.2 Lexical Choices Related to Policy Debates

As concerns policy debates, lexical choices shape narratives and perspectives on issues surrounding migration, border control, and development. Individuals articulate their views, concerns, and proposed solutions, reflecting a spectrum of opinions within the policy discourse.

“the #MigrationCrisis is real coz the people in charge are letting it happen for whatever reasons.” Questions government response to unauthorized border crossings.

“the #EU has announced a €7.4 billion economic aid for #Egypt in effort to avert another #MigrationCrisis.” Highlights support to address “root causes” through development.

“PM Melon says Italy’s g7 Presidency will pay special attention to the African continent by working with the region leaders and partners to support Africa’s developments on an equal basis and put an end to illegal migration while also fighting human trafficking and root out the cause of the migration crisis.” Notes development and security-focused approach.

5.2.3 Lexical choices related to Economics

Within discussions on economics, lexical choices serve as key indicators of the motivations, challenges, and impacts of migration and integration. Through language, individuals convey their perspectives on economic factors driving emigration, strains on welfare systems, and disparities in treatment, highlighting the complex interplay between economic conditions and migration dynamics.

“I can’t understand the rationale behind struggling to gather 20Million just to travel to another man’s land to start hustling

from the scratch.” Questions economic motivations for emigration.

“My wife just left a nursing home supervisor position for this exact reason. The facility was filled with non-English speaking workers who were paid more money than better-qualified native workers.” Alleges preferential treatment of migrants.

“Over 4.8 million people in the #Sahel have recently been forced to flee their homes. Mali and other countries require urgent support to avert crisis.” References scale of displacement crises.

5.2.4 Lexical choices related to Integration

In the context of integration, lexical choices are instrumental in conveying attitudes towards language learning, cultural adaptation, and societal inclusion. Through carefully selected words and phrases, migrant narrators express views on the challenges and successes of integration processes, reflecting diverse perspectives on the dynamics of assimilation and cultural exchange.

“Problem with migrants is that many fail to integrate; fail to: - Learn the language -Give up their outdated customs -Accept women as equals -Acquire skills; work hard; prefer welfare-Adapt to local culture -Adopt the local values.” Criticizes failure of cultural adaptation.

“I arrived in this country a refugee born in Burundi. My family is from Rwanda tho. I came here when I could barely speak any language let alone English. Raised here, lived, loved and will have wee Scottish bairns.” Emphasizes positive integration experience.

“So.....this migrant who doesn't speak any English has African friends? And what language do they converse in?” Questions scenario as unrealistic given language barriers.

Cultural/National Pride

Expressions of cultural and national pride are woven into lexical choices, reflecting sentiments of attachment, identity, and belonging, given that people convey their pride in indigenous cultures and home nations, while also expressing concerns over perceived threats to resources, borders, and cultural heritage.

“BIG NEWS □ Kashmiri journalist Yana Mir's words stunned attendees in UK Parliament Building □□She said “I am not a Malala. I am free and I am safe in my country India, in my home

in Kashmir which is part of India.” Expressing pride in cultural identity.

“However in India, the state of Manipur, the indigenous #Meitei people are no more safe against the marauding illegal #kuki immigrants. Kashmir you are so lucky we envy you.” Highlighting concerns around loss of cultural identity.

Sovereignty/Control of Borders

The selection of specific words and phrases in discussions surrounding sovereignty and border control helps to reveal the underlying ideologies and policies shaping these areas. These choices often reflect broader political, social, and legal perspectives on issues related to national boundaries, security, immigration, and governance.

“If a poor, brown, non-English speaking socialist migrant Jew walked around America today, you and your ilk would have him immediately deported.” Critiquing perception of selective border control based on attributes.

“Hundreds of migrants rush to US border and knock guards out of the way #BreakingNews #PoliticsLive #PoliticsNews #PoliticsToday #USA #USANewsToday #UnitedStates #Texas #TexasBorder #Mexico #Migration #MigrantCrisis #MigrationCrisis #Immigration” Raising alarm over loss of border control.

Cultural Change/Loss:

In the context of cultural change and loss, lexical choices reflect narratives of adaptation, preservation, and lamentation over shifting societal dynamics. Examples from the data are:

“After 15 years I’m moving 30 miles away from the city. My kids can’t even play in the front yard. Non-English speaking migrants everywhere.” Lamenting cultural/social changes from migration.

“The tragedy is that, it is also a human trafficking crisis ☹️☹️☹️ At US/Mexico Border With Texas Sheriff” Contrasting humanitarian framing of issue.

Table 3: Lexical Choices

Category	Summary of Trends
Cultural/National Pride	Expressions of pride in indigenous cultures/home nations; concerns over loss of resources/borders.
Sovereignty/Borders	Characterizations of borders as uncontrolled; concerns over selective approaches and loss of sovereignty.
Cultural Change/Loss	Worries over sudden demographic/cultural changes; perceived threats to livelihoods/ways of life.
Integration	Focus on language learning/customs adoption; public service impacts/perceived preferential treatment.
Economics	Push factors like conflict/violence; language barriers; strains on welfare systems.
Policy Debates	Views on border control; development support; accounting of costs/benefits; humanitarian framings.
Identity (General)	Varied identity narratives present; both concerns over changes and welcoming contributions.

References are counted across seven categories: Cultural/National Pride; Sovereignty/Borders; Cultural Change/Loss; Integration; Economics; Policy Debates; and general Identity. Notably, on the selected data, Cultural/National Pride and Sovereignty/Borders received the most references (10 and 8, respectively), indicating these issues resonate strongly. Both also exhibited concerns over perceived threats, highlighting emotional investment in questions of sociocultural continuity and autonomy. Additionally, integration received fewer references yet demonstrated contrasting positions, with some posts emphasizing non-adaptation while others highlighted success stories. This duality underscores integration as a multidimensional concept with polarizing aspects. Economic references spanned push

factors driving emigration and integration barriers, conveying this theme's complexity. Policy debates reflected a range of stances on appropriate solutions from restrictive to accommodating approaches. General identity references cut across categories, affirming identity as an interwoven, contested construct. Cultural change/loss and identity posts more often featured worries than welcome, though contributions were acknowledged. Comparatively, categories eliciting stronger reactions addressed emotional core values surrounding nationhood and autonomy. Meanwhile, integration and economic categories contained more divergent viewpoints, suggesting ongoing debate. Summarily, lexical choices in the dataset map onto identified categories in meaningful ways, with general identity references that cut across different categories, and prompt greater uniformity of sentiment.

5.3. Narrative Structures on Migration, Conflict and Language

Through the analysis of data extracted from hashtags, distinct narrative forms were evident: chronological accounts, narratives with flashbacks, emotive storytelling, and contextual analyses. These structures not only shape the portrayal of migration narratives but also expands the understanding of personal experiences and societal perceptions related to migration.

5.3.1 Chronological Accounts

A prominent technique utilized time-sequenced descriptions to carefully contextualize experiences. Several powerful accounts methodically traced migrant journeys from origin to arrival. One example vividly recounted “when somebody illegally comes in...” marching step-by-step through enforcement scenarios. Others employed chronology to sequentially illustrate population dynamics facing specific regions. A data point highlighting “Population surge to a record high in #London...” walked through rising influx statistics over time. Similarly, “Hundreds of migrants rush to US border...” stringently outlined unfolding events.

5.3.2 Narratives with Flashbacks

Fleshing out stories with flashes of memory granted insightful perspective on formative life events still resonating. Migrants often revisited seminal episodes that profoundly shaped their subsequent paths. Recalling “after about 20 minutes...” transported back to a defining interaction. Additionally,

reexperiencing “I vividly recall moments when my inability to express myself...” plunged into intensely personal situations of unspoken trauma. Flashbacks likewise enriched broader discussion, as critiquing preparation through “We don’t even have a precise number on how many illegals are already here...”

5.3.3 Emotive Storytelling

Sharing raw emotion through vulnerable quotes from direct experiences succeeded in bringing candid humanity to discussions. Searing first hand narratives demanded empathetic engagement. The cry “I watched in horror as they mercilessly took my father’s life...” laid bare unimaginable suffering. Compassionate calls to action like “she made it to #GomaDRC #RefugeeCamp...” movingly appealed for assistance through individual struggle. Meanwhile, “The facility was filled with non-English speaking workers...” powerfully underscored linguistic marginalization.

5.3.4. Contextual Analyses

Thoughtful examination of wider societal angles afforded deeper understanding of root dynamics. Statistical insights like “More than 73 % of Irish people...” objectively mapped shifting viewpoints. Yet alternative stances also probed contexts searchingly, as critiquing disparate treatment through “Rightttt and we know why that’s been the case with Ukrainian migration but not with people from South America.”

These narrative structures contribute to the meaning-making process by providing a vivid and personal portrayal of the migrant experience, illustrating the challenges, emotions, and complexity of migration on social media.

Table 4: Narrative Structures

Narrative Structure	Description
Chronological Accounts	Posts that employed time-sequenced descriptions to contextualize experiences and population dynamics.
Narratives With Flashbacks	Stories fleshed out with flashes of memory granting perspective through revisiting formative life events.
Emotive Storytelling	Sharing raw emotion through vulnerable firsthand quotes demanding empathy.
Contextual Analyses	Thoughtful examinations of wider societal angles affording deeper understanding of root dynamics.

A variety of narrative techniques were employed in the analyzed posts to share perspectives on migration. Chronological Accounts used sequenced descriptions that systematically traced migrant journeys from origin to arrival, while also progressively illustrating shifts in population statistics over time. This provided careful contextualization of experiences and issues. Meanwhile, Narratives with Flashbacks fleshed out stories through flashes of vivid memory that transported the reader back to formative life events, plunging them into intensely personal situations of unspoken trauma. Additionally, Emotive Storytelling brought candid humanity to discussions by openly sharing raw firsthand narratives demanding empathetic engagement. These searing accounts laid bare unimaginable suffering and movingly appealed for humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, Contextual Analyses took a thoughtful examination approach, granting deeper understanding of root dynamics through mapping how viewpoints evolved objectively over time as well as probing contexts searchingly from alternative stances. Altogether, these narrative structures meaningfully portrayed the migrant experience through the depiction that vividly illustrated the complex challenges, profound emotions, and wider societal angles involved in the issue of migration as portrayed on social media.

Here are three critical paragraphs addressing the identified issues regarding the breakdown of sentiments, lexical categories, and a deeper exploration of intersectionality within the data. These can be inserted into the ****Results**** section of your study.

In sum, the data above show sentiments expressed within the collected data, revealing both positive and negative identity markers. Positive sentiments emerge from narratives that highlight resilience, community support, and successful integration into new environments. For instance, many migrants share uplifting stories of forming new relationships and finding opportunities that affirm their identities. Conversely, negative sentiments frequently stem from experiences of discrimination, marginalization, and the trauma associated with displacement. This duality indicates the necessity of not merely quantifying sentiments but also understanding the socio-cultural contexts that shape these emotional expressions. Likewise, key lexical in the data categories include terms associated with belonging, displacement, and agency, which serve to illustrate the linguistic strategies employed by migrants to articulate their experiences. Lastly, the results show that each migrant's experience is shaped by a confluence of factors, including race, gender, socioeconomic status, and cultural background.

5.4 Reflection of Power Structures in Migrant Narratives

This analysis examines perspectives on migration reflected in online posts categorized into three themes: Reflection of Power Structures, Provision of Examples that Perpetuate or Challenge Stereotypes, and Unexpected Findings.

5.4.1 Reflection of Power

The tweet stating “Non-English speaking migrants everywhere. We import 70 and 80 year olds from Somalia just to put on welfare. I’ve seen dozens of them. Slow suicide.” reflects the perspective that migrants are overwhelming local areas and draining welfare resources. The person posting this views the migration of elderly Somalis as deliberately placing financial burdens on taxpayers and contributing to societal decline over

time. The Facebook post asserting “My facility was filled with non-English speaking workers who were paid more money than better-qualified native workers. This continued after the government funding ended and these entitled migrants were not held accountable for their actions.” depicts migrants as receiving unjustified preferential treatment and privileges over citizens, with taxpayers' money being squandered on hiring those less qualified simply due to their status as migrants.

However, the tweet disagreeing and stating “I worked with many undocumented workers during my 25 year career in Homebuilding! YOU will never find a harder, faster & more conscientious worker!” challenges the stereotype that migrants make for poor, lazy employees by emphasizing their strong work ethic and high job performance in the speaker's own extensive experience.

5.4.2 Provision of Examples that Perpetuate or Challenge Stereotypes

The Facebook post stating “Population surge to a record high in #London and the impact of #migration across #UK is all to see in #education #benefits #NHS #housing #dentists - this is why hardworking #taxpayers are upset!” suggests that rising migrant populations are overburdening public services and angering citizens who fund these systems through tax payments.

The post declaring “Criminal, uneducated, non-English speaking, resource taking, health care clogging, affordable housing thieves, cartel enriching, migrants! I know it is a mouth full, but let's call it what it is!” strongly conveys the view that migrants are generally dangerous lawbreakers who drain social services and commit various forms of theft and illegal activity.

5.4.3 Unexpected Findings

The Facebook post quoting “Nearly 4.8 million people in the #Sahel have recently been forced to flee their homes. Mali and

other countries in the Sahel are under strain from forced displacement and require urgent support to avert crisis, @Refugees warns.” conveys a sense of empathy and concern for migrants who have been forcibly displaced from their home countries in large numbers. The person posting this highlights the humanitarian crisis driving migration out of the Sahel region and calls for assistance to the vulnerable people affected.

The comment stating “I honestly think the problem of Muslim behaviour in Europe is rooted in the fact that Europe has brought over their LEAST educated ones. I think something around half the migrants Germany took couldn't even read and write in their own language! This is of course why Israeli lobby is so supportive of mass migration.” levels criticism at European migration policies rather than at migrants themselves. The individual posting this argues that integration challenges stem from a systemic failure to properly select and prepare incoming populations, focusing the argument on policy shortcomings instead of blaming migrants as individuals.

Table 5: Power Structures

Category	Description	Examples
Reflection of Power Structures	Posts that align with or challenge dominant narratives around migrants.	Some posts emphasized stereotypes of migrants overwhelming communities/straining welfare. Others pushed back on these perspectives.
Provision of Examples that Perpetuate or Challenge Stereotypes	Posts aim to perpetuate common stereotypes about migration impacts or challenge them.	Some portrayed migrants as burdens/threats while others highlighted contributions or acknowledged complex challenges.
Unexpected Findings	Posts diverged from simple stereotypes,	While some conveyed concern for displaced people, others critiqued

	prioritizing empathy nuanced discussion.	or	policy failures over individual responsibility.
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In summary, the Reflection of Power Structures category included both stereotypical and alternative portrayals of migrants. The Provision of Examples similarly featured posts perpetuating stereotypes as well as challenging them. Meanwhile, Unexpected Findings surfaced less predictable narratives focusing on compassion or systemic issues rather than blame.

6. Discussion

This multi-modal critical discourse analysis helps in the understanding of identity construction and social representations of migrants through examination of language patterns and narrative forms on Twitter. From a Narrative Theory perspective, the identification of positive and negative lexical features reflects the complexity of ongoing migrant identity negotiations unfolding via social media storytelling (Bamberg, 2004). Code-switching enactments display narrative elements of “tellability” that increase listener engagement with translocal experiences (Georgakopoulou, 2006). Hashtags like #asylumseeker, #migrationcrisis, #refugeeswelcome, #identitycrisis, #homestaying, #refugeecamp, #counterstereotypes, #socialjustice and #humanrights also function as identity “tokens” that migrants and allies employ to collaboratively construct alternative collective narratives of shared struggles and solidarity against dominant exclusionary discourses (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015). Chronological vs. emotive narrative forms carry different appeals that variously humanize migrants, sentimentalize suffering, or maintain objective distance (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015).

Audience reception and challenges to power are shaped depending on whose voices, emotions and lived experiences directly come through in mediated representations versus

contextual background analyses. This attempt to capture diverse narrative styles and subject positions helps this study to demonstrate Narrative Theory's ability to display complexity in identity work and audience impacts online. Applying CDA further illuminates the socio-political positioning of migrant subjects. Further, criminalizing and dehumanizing terminology reinforce the marginalization of migrants as non-belonging threats through Othering language (Van Dijk, 2000). Conversely, acknowledgement of economic integration and cultural exchange establish an alternative migrant subjectivity of valued contribution that challenges dominant restrictive discourses (Wodak, 2015). Shifting between crisis and solidarity frames likewise reproduces problematic hierarchies of deservedness through the uneven application of empathy (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

Technical architectures and hashtagged topics of discussion likewise construct parameters for the types of identities and viewpoints that become visibly represented (Androutsopoulos, 2008). Moreover, self-selection issues indicate some voices may be missing or silenced within algorithmically organized online spheres that shape everyday language use and the propagation of perspectives. This limitation signals opportunities for targeted digital ethnographic methods to cultivate underrepresented insider viewpoints. The present study adeptly extends the discourse on migrant identity negotiation in the digital age, particularly through the lens of social media. Platforms such as Twitter and Facebook are significant arenas where migrants can assert their identities and challenge prevailing stereotypes. The study highlights how these digital narratives contribute to a reconfiguration of public discourse. Nonetheless, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations inherent in this study. Given that it does not address specific crises, an exploration of diverse migrant experiences related to specific crises across different contexts is necessary. Methodologically, innovative multi-modal analysis of social media texts offers a progressive means for theoretical exploration with direct policy and social implications. In this regard, sustained interdisciplinary scholarship at this digital intersection remains imperative to foster equitable public understandings and inclusive political change.

7. Conclusion

This study set out to examine how migrant communities employ social media platforms, specifically Twitter and Facebook, to perform resilient identity negotiations in resisting marginalizing discourses (De Fina et al., 2006). In line with prior research emphasizing migrant agency in digital spheres (Pennycook, 2007; Arnaut et al., 2016), findings highlighted linguistic hybridity displayed through code-switching between heritage languages and English. This affirms theory that online spaces facilitate navigation of translocal identities between homelands and host communities (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). Hashtag usage also reflected communal identity construction divergent from frameworks emphasizing separation, such as statements of shared experience with #WithRefugees, #refugeeswelcome and #socialjustice (Malkki, 1992). Moreover, the results reiterated the need for more participatory approaches that acknowledge power differentials in mobilities research (Androutsopoulos, 2008). This indicates that centered migrant perspectives that cultivate “insiderness” can uncover silenced voices absent from algorithmically organized online discussions (Hine, 2015). Moving forward, researchers may build on this analysis by combining semantic mapping with qualitative virtual ethnographies. Such targeted digital methods hold prospective to examine intersectional migrant subjectivities and challenge singular understandings (Norris, 2004). Also, collaboratively amplifying subaltern knowledge in policymaking through prioritizing decolonizing techniques remains key to shaping truly inclusive conceptualizations (Georgakopoulou, 2006). In conclusion, findings provided entry points into not only biased displays towards migrants but resistance enacted through storytelling amid exclusion online. However, future interdisciplinary work at the intersection of critical mobilities theories, narrative frameworks and sociotechnical systems could further examine complexity in migrant identity negotiations as dynamic processes unfolding across borders (Bamberg, 2004; De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015). This process of centering marginalized lived experiences can reshape multidimensional portraits of

resilience capable of transforming public discourses and structural conditions over the long term.

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Appendix

Table 6: 40 Hashtags on Migration, Conflict and Identity

No.	Hashtag	No. of Uses
1	#migrationcrisis	250
2	#refugeeswelcome	180
3	#displacement	120
4	#asylumseeker	90
5	#forcedmigration	75
6	#identitycrisis	50
7	#homestaying	30
8	#borderconflict	45
9	#refugeecamp	60
10	#nonenglishspeakingmigrants	40
11	#linguisticbarriers	20
12	#culturalclash	15
13	#lostinvocabulary	10
14	#migrationnarratives	150
15	#shiftingnarratives	80
16	#medialiteracy	25
17	#counterstereotypes	35
18	#socialjustice	40
19	#humanrights	65
20	#globalnorth	100
21	#globalsouth	85
22	#migrationpolicy	20
23	#advocacy	30
24	#displacementcamps	15
25	#integrationchallenges	25
26	#culturalexchange	20
27	#languagetranslation	10
28	#educationforall	15
29	#opportunities	25
30	#socialinclusion	20
31	#refugeesupport	35
32	#asylumprocess	15
33	#migrantworkers	20
34	#climatechangemigration	10

35	#environmentaldisplacement	10
36	#sustainability	15
37	#peacebuilding	10
38	#diplomacy	10
39	#globalcitizenship	15
40	#humanity	30