Refugee, migrant, or asylum seeker crisis?

(VERY) PRELIMINARY RESULTS

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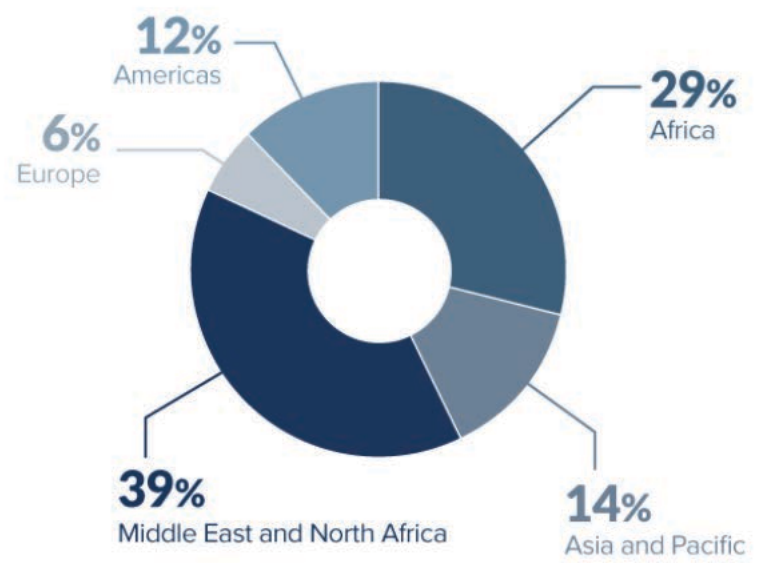VU VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM

NETWORK INSTITUTE

Unit: million

65.3 million
forcibly displaced people worldwide

Refugees
21.3 million

54% of refugees worldwide came from three countries

Where the world's displaced people are being hosted

Somalia
1.1m

Afghanistan
2.7m

Syria
4.9m

12% Americas

6% Europe

29% Africa

39% Middle East and North Africa

14% Asia and Pacific

Source: UNHCR

Syrians in neighbouring countries and Europe

NORWAY

SWEDEN 64,685

Top 15 European countries for Syrian asylum applications*

Syrian refugees registered in neighbouring countries

UK 7,030

DENMARK

NETHERLANDS

GERMANY 98,783

BELGIUM

10,000   100,000   500,000

AUSTRIA

FRANCE

HUNGARY

SWITZERLAND

SERBIA

BULGARIA

TURKEY 1,938,999

SPAIN

GREECE

LEBANON 1,113,941

SYRIA

IRAQ

JORDAN 629,266

LIBYA

EGYPT

*Asylum applications by Syrian nationals from April 2011 to June 2015

In Europe

- The European Union's response to the crisis has been widely seen as inadequate, yet it is still defined as the key institution responsible for solving the crisis

- Prime Minister **David Cameron**: "*swarms of people coming across the Mediterranean*"

- Home Secretary **David Blunkett**: referred to child asylum seekers as '*swamping*' some British schools

- **Marine Le Pen**, National Front party France, referred to the wave of refugees as "migrant anarchy."

- Luxembourg Foreign Minister **Jean Asselborn:** "We are heading into anarchy"

- Greek Prime Minister **Alexis Tsipras:** "We will not accept turning the country into a permanent warehouse of souls"

The Crisis in Social Media: the positive

- Facebook pages that provide crucial information to refugees

- Groups on Facebook such as the 'Syrian Refugee Helpers in Istanbul'

- Hundreds of Facebook posts offer pointers on how to get to Europe

- Social media has allowed the world to evolve into a global community
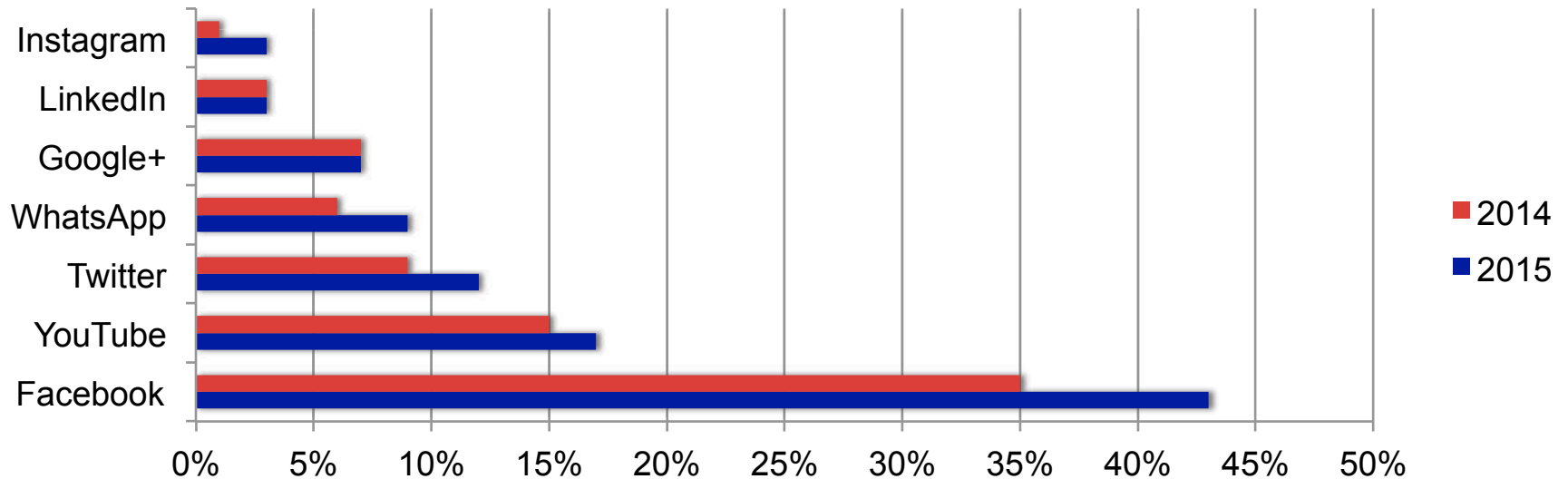
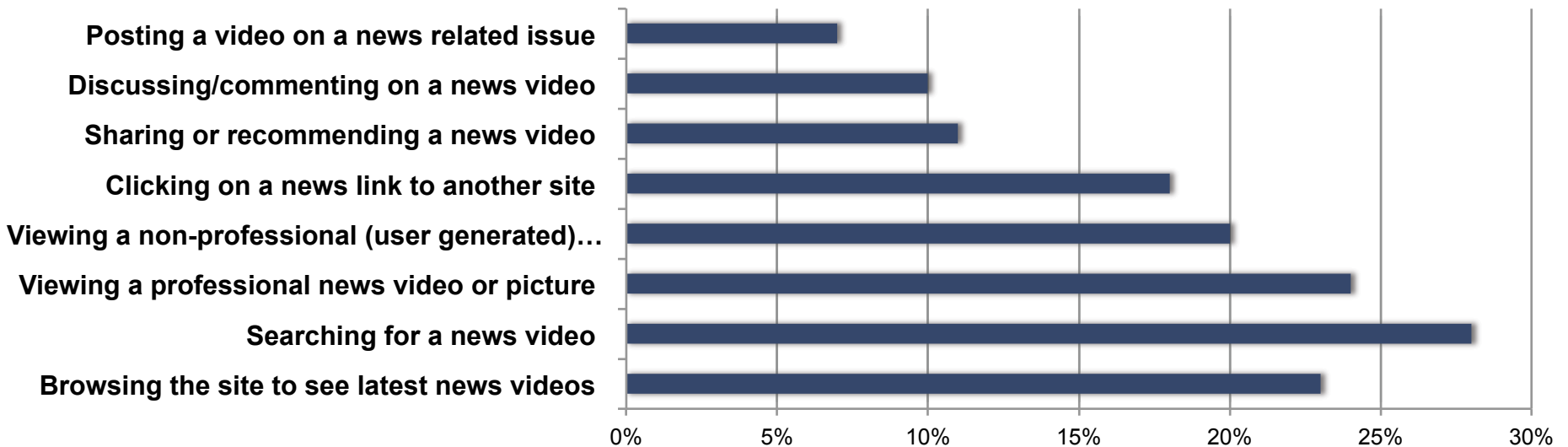# The Crisis in Social Media: the negative
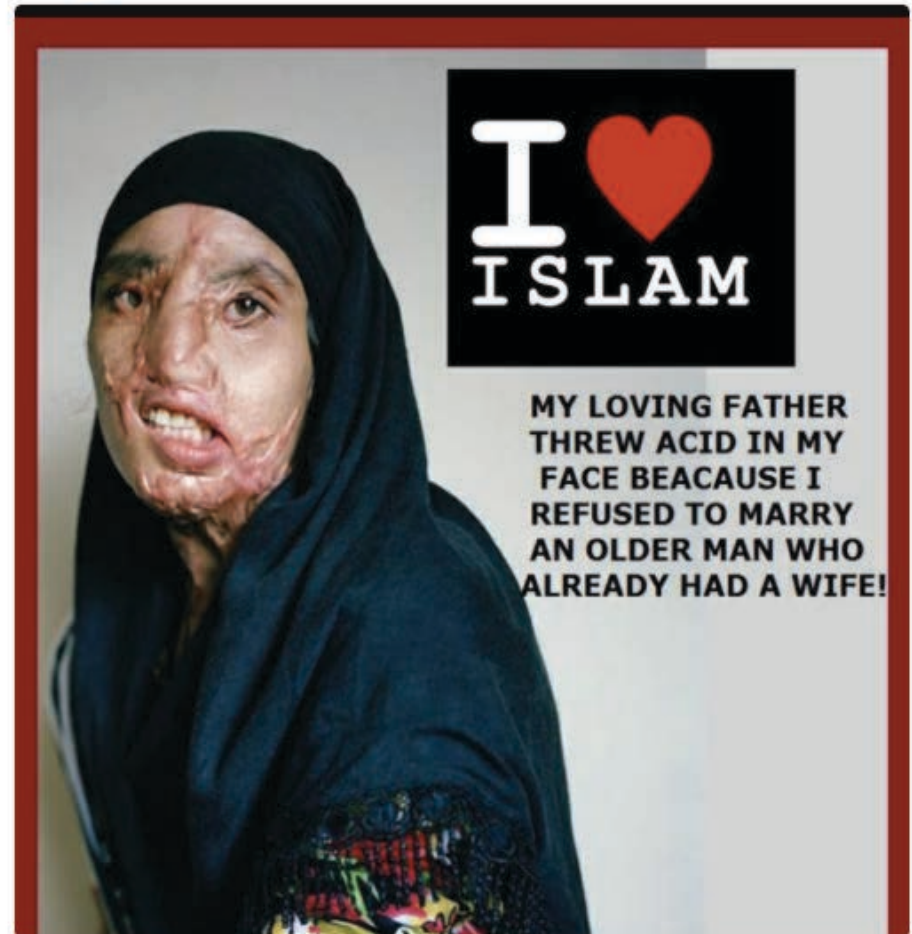
YouTube

- Over 300 hours of videos uploaded every minute

- 4,950,000,000 videos viewed on YouTube everyday

- 900,000,000 unique visitors every month

- We spend an average of 40 minutes per session watching YouTube!

- YouTube has something for everyone

- YouTube videos can have a significant impact on the outside world

- Facilitate exchanges of views amongst citizens, a "public sphere" (Habermas, 1991)

MAIN SOCIAL NETWORKS FOR NEWS

Legend: ■ 2014 ■ 2015

(Bar chart, horizontal axis 0% to 50%)

- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Google+
- WhatsApp
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Facebook

TYPES OF ACTIVITY IN SOCIAL MEDIA – UK – YOUTUBE

(Bar chart, horizontal axis 0% to 30%)

- Posting a video on a news related issue
- Discussing/commenting on a news video
- Sharing or recommending a news video
- Clicking on a news link to another site
- Viewing a non-professional (user generated)…
- Viewing a professional news video or picture
- Searching for a news video
- Browsing the site to see latest news videos

Source: Reuters Institute for the study of Journalism

Dynamics of related videos on YouTube:
the case of the refugee crisis

So what is this all about?

"The European **migrant crisis or** European **refugee crisis** began in 2015, when a rising number of refugees and migrants made the journey to the European Union (EU) to seek **asylum**, traveling across the Mediterranean Sea or through Southeast Europe".

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Are they really synonyms?

- **Refugees** are people fleeing conflict or persecution. They are defined and protected in international law, and must not be expelled or returned to situations where their life and freedom are at risk.

- **Migrants** choose to move to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons.

- An **asylum-seeker** is someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed.

Source: UNHCR

Refugee
or
Migrant?

Word choice matters.

© UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Aims and Data

- <u>Interactivity</u> of YouTube: viewers can post video responses or text comments after watching a video.

- <u>Audience reactions</u>: comment-based discussions

- Anonymity seems to partly free participants from social norms

- Labels given to the crisis

- How do conversations about this issue evolve over time?

- Reactions and sentiment associated with these different labels on social media (i.e., YouTube)

- Have these 3 labels evolved from indicators of sentiment to synonyms?

YouTube related videos:

- Search terms: "refugee crisis", "migrant crisis", "asylum seeker";
- Limited to EN language videos;
- Retained: top 500 most relevant for each search string;

Views per category

44967781

36905393

5637245

Refugee Crisis   Migrant Crisis   Asylum Seeker

- Comments
- Likes
- Dislike

Refugee Crisis   Migrant Crisis   Asylum Seeker

Refugee Crisis

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvOnXh3NN9w
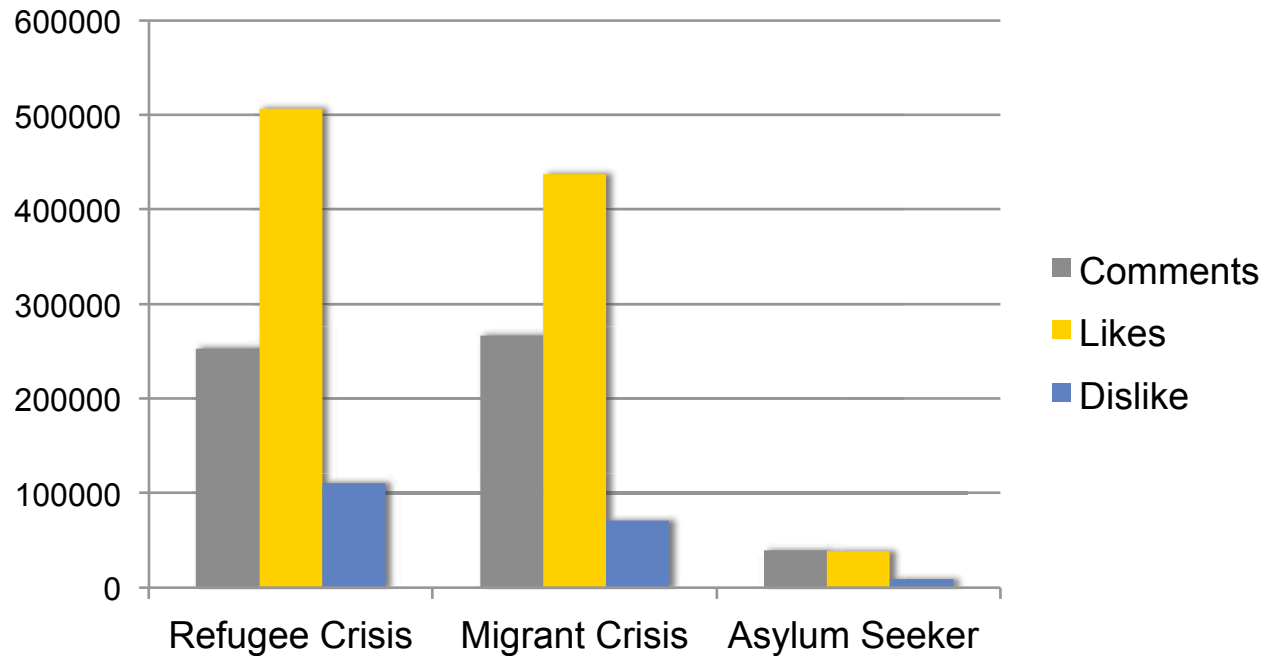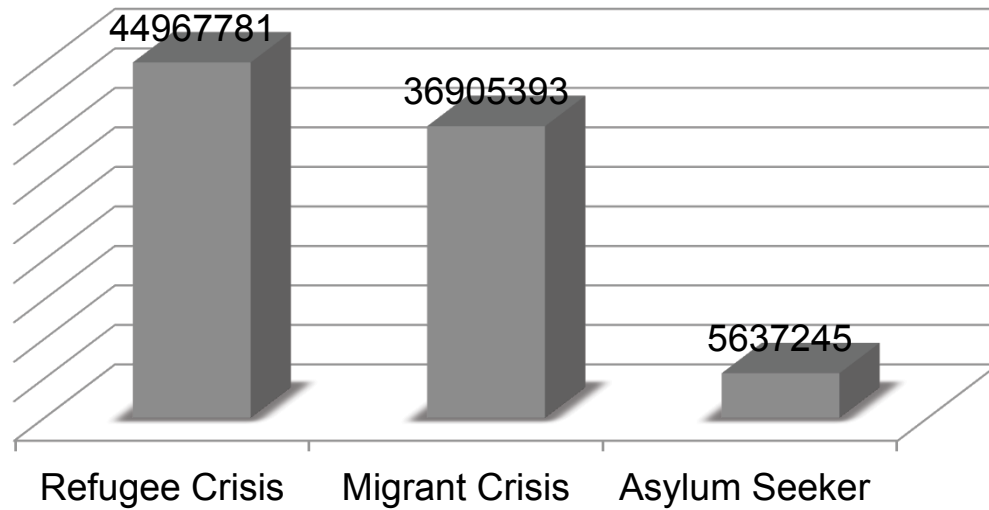
Views 9,615,526	Comment 15,150	Likes 141,883	Dislike 40,045

Published on Sep 17, 2015

The European Refugee Crisis and Syria Explained

Migrant Crisis

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umqvYhb3wf4

Views 8,055,012	Comment 11,358	Likes 90,245	Dislike 25,509

Published on Sep 28, 2015

Last Week Tonight with John Oliver: Migrants and Refugees (HBO)

Asylum Seeker

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCOLcMqdpls

Views 685,920	Comment 4946	Likes 15,403	Dislike 3,166

Published on Sep 2, 2015

"Immigration, Amnesty and Migration" Playlist   NEW: The Death of Germany
going to judge you. This is where people are going to put flowers on your tombstones or
What Pisses Me Off About The European Migrant Crisis

Networks

1. **Social networks:** comments and replies

2. **Semantic networks:** concepts in comments

3. **Socio-semantic networks:** a combination of the above

Legend:
AS = Asylum Crisis Video
MC = Migrant Crisis Video
RC = Refugee Crisis Video

# Social network
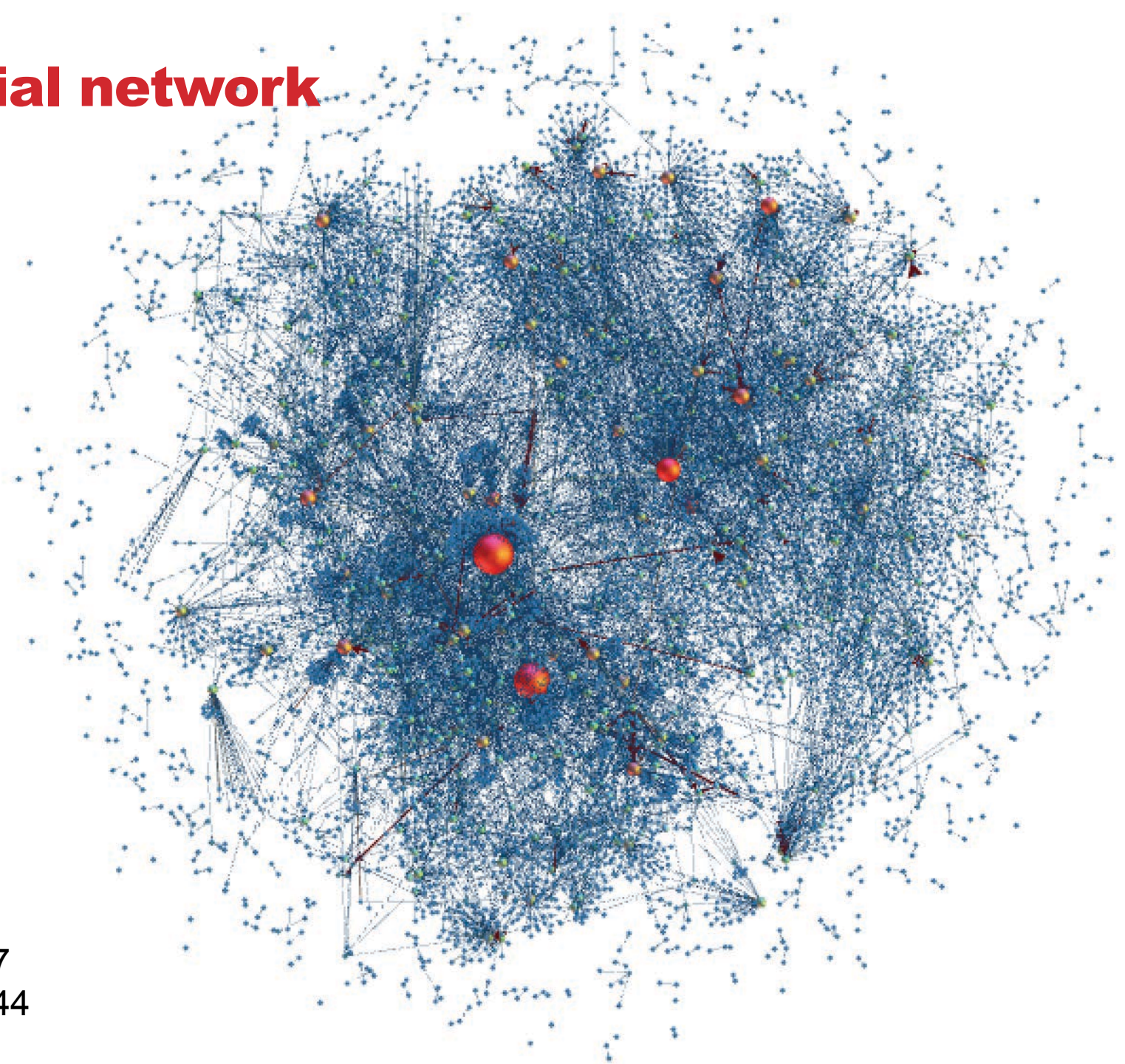
n= 8757
e= 12844

Socio-Semantic Network

Agent : size 232

Concept : size 185
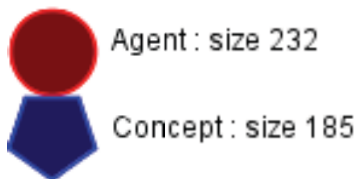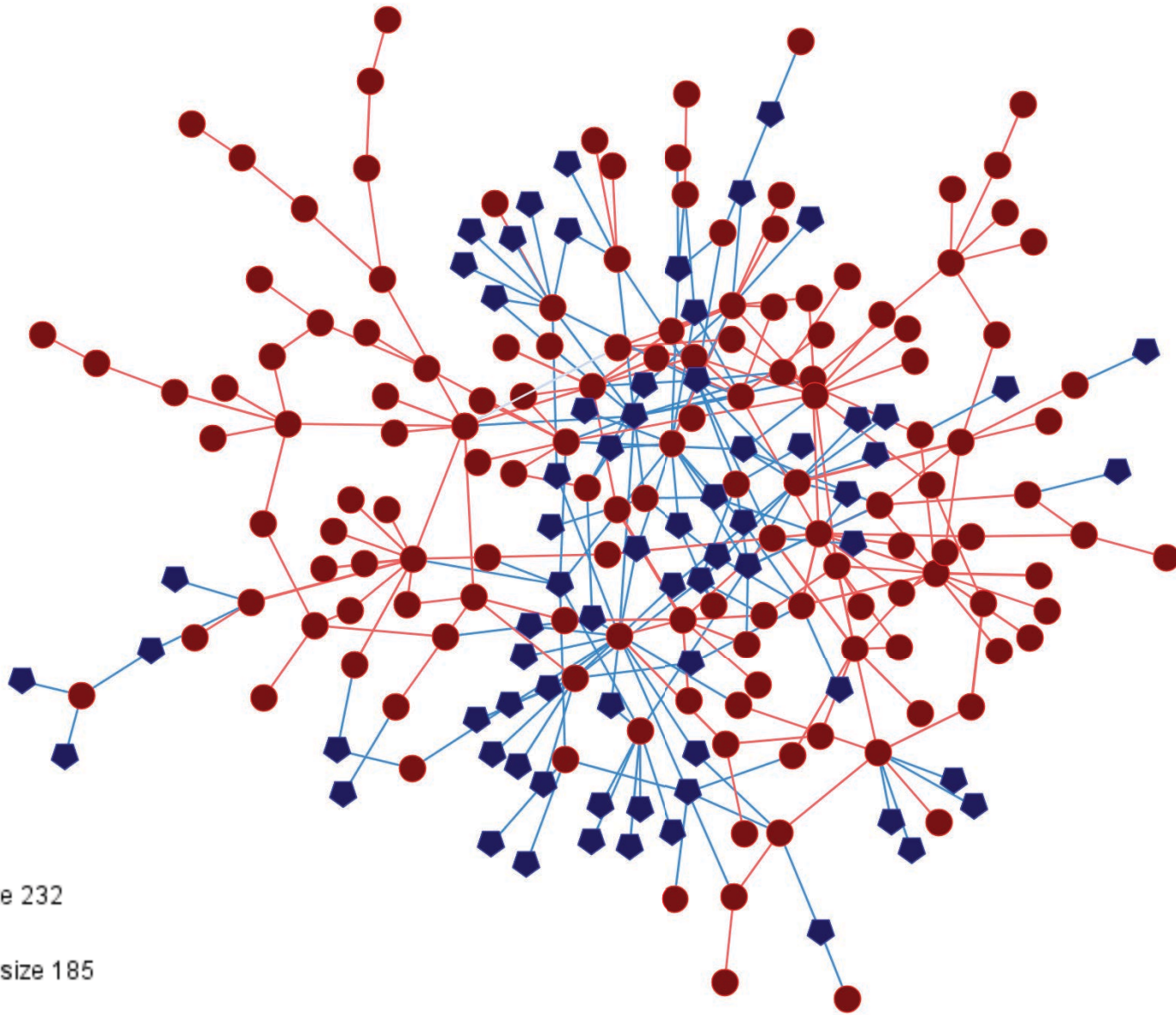
Most frequent concepts

	AS	Freq.	MC	Freq.	RC	Freq.
1	people	2180	people	5165	refugee	6876
2	country	1822	country	4491	people	6200
3	europe	1565	refugee	4419	country	4912
4	immigrant	1155	europe	2715	europe	3889
5	refugee	1027	muslim	2564	muslim	3114
6	usa	938	usa	2350	usa	2636
7	muslim	872	migrant	2331	syrian	2226
8	war	767	f**k	1931	help	2052
9	european	667	immigrant	1852	syria	1978
10	culture	661	european	1511	war	1604

Comments per day

Comments

- AS video
- MC video
- RC video

Migrant Crisis Comments: first 5 days (1-5)
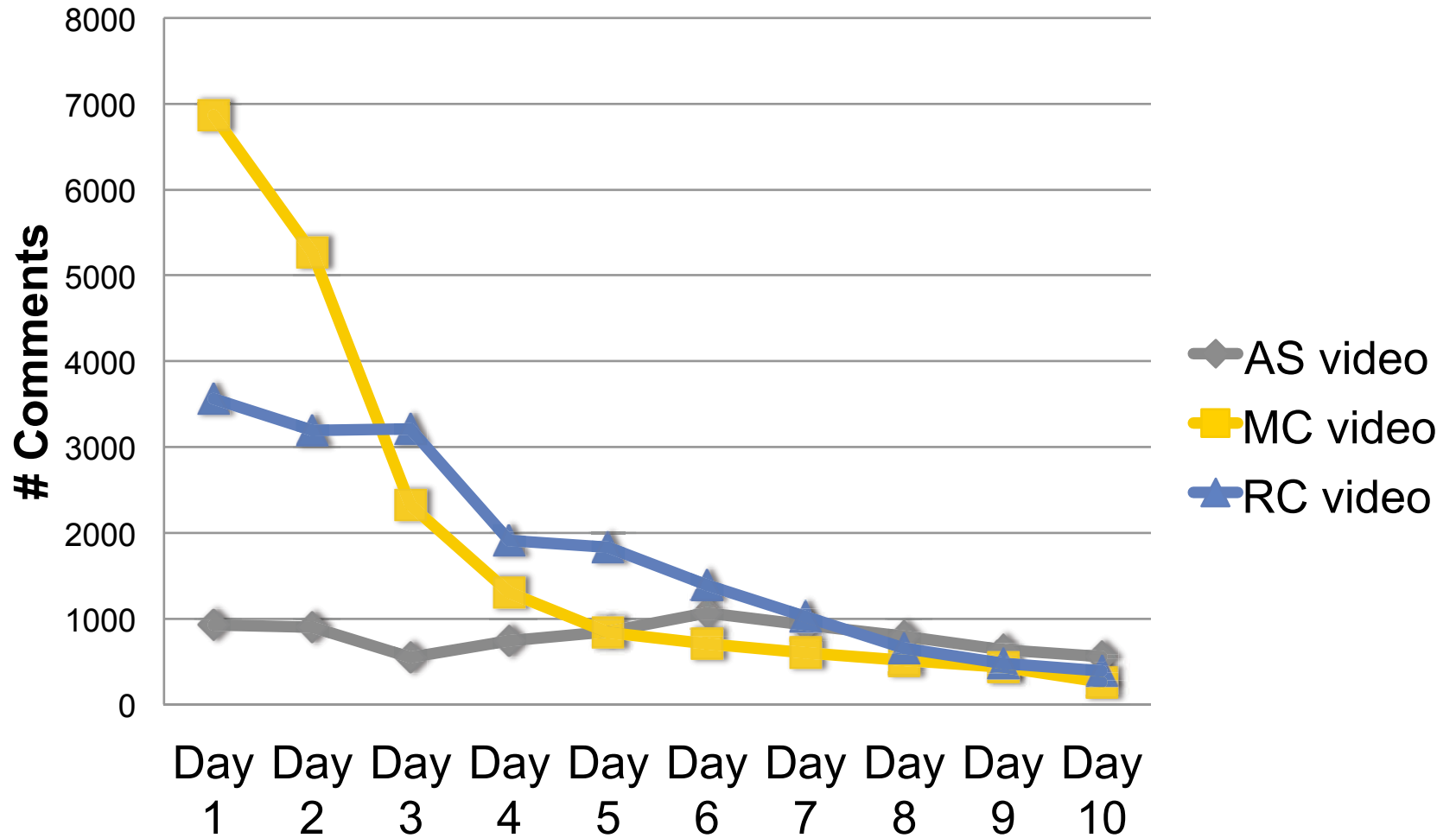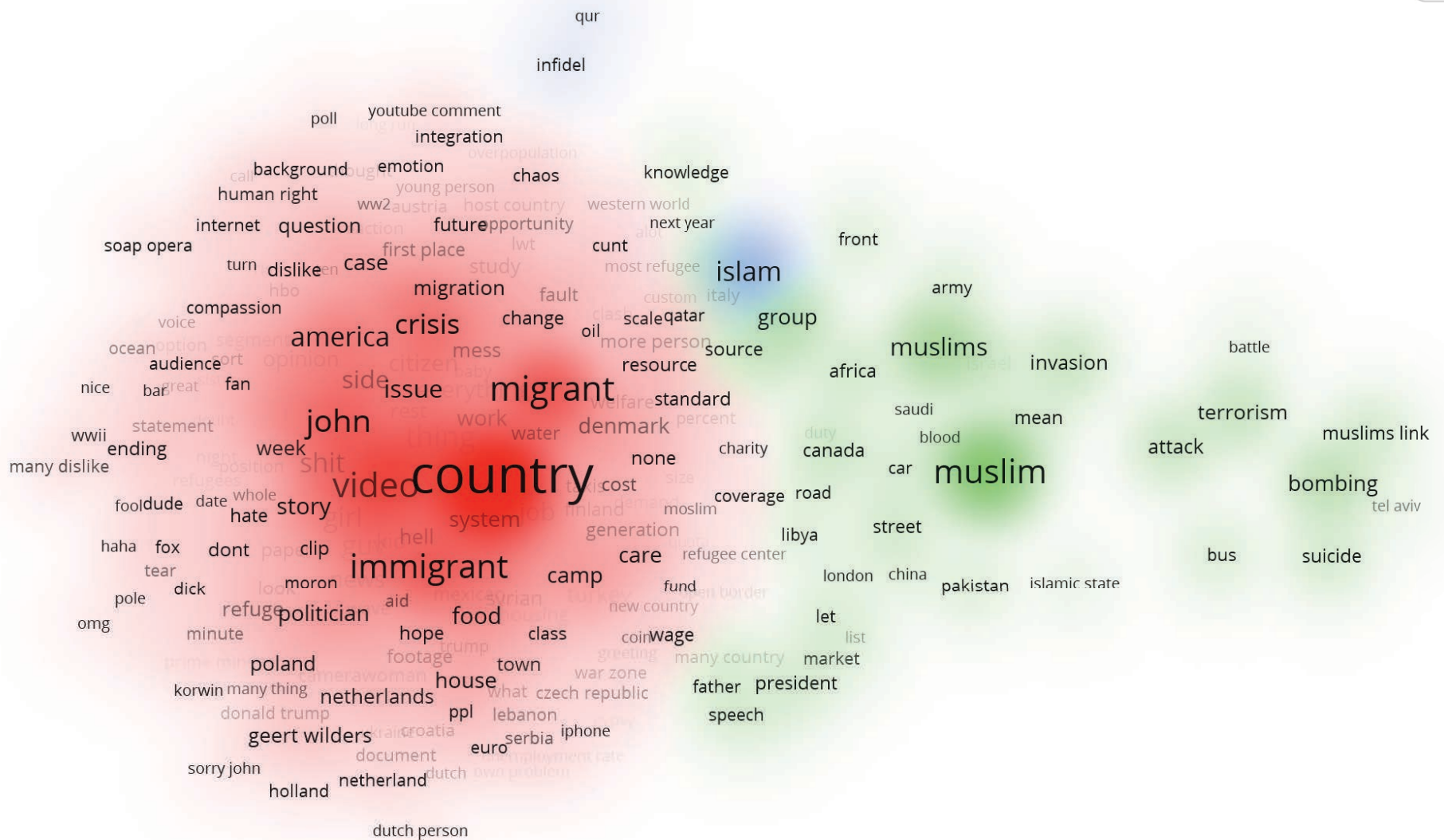
Migrant Crisis Comments: next 5 days (6-10)
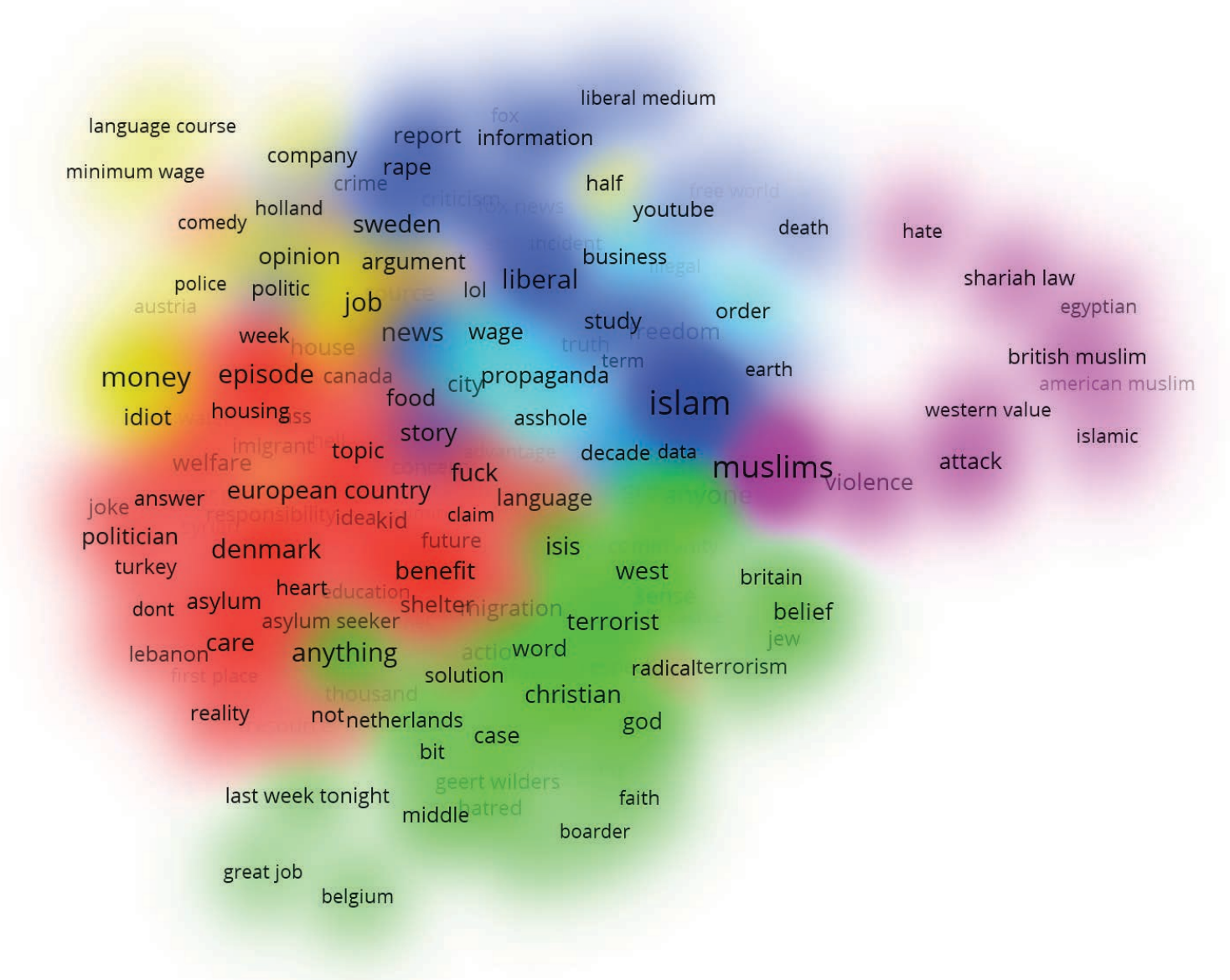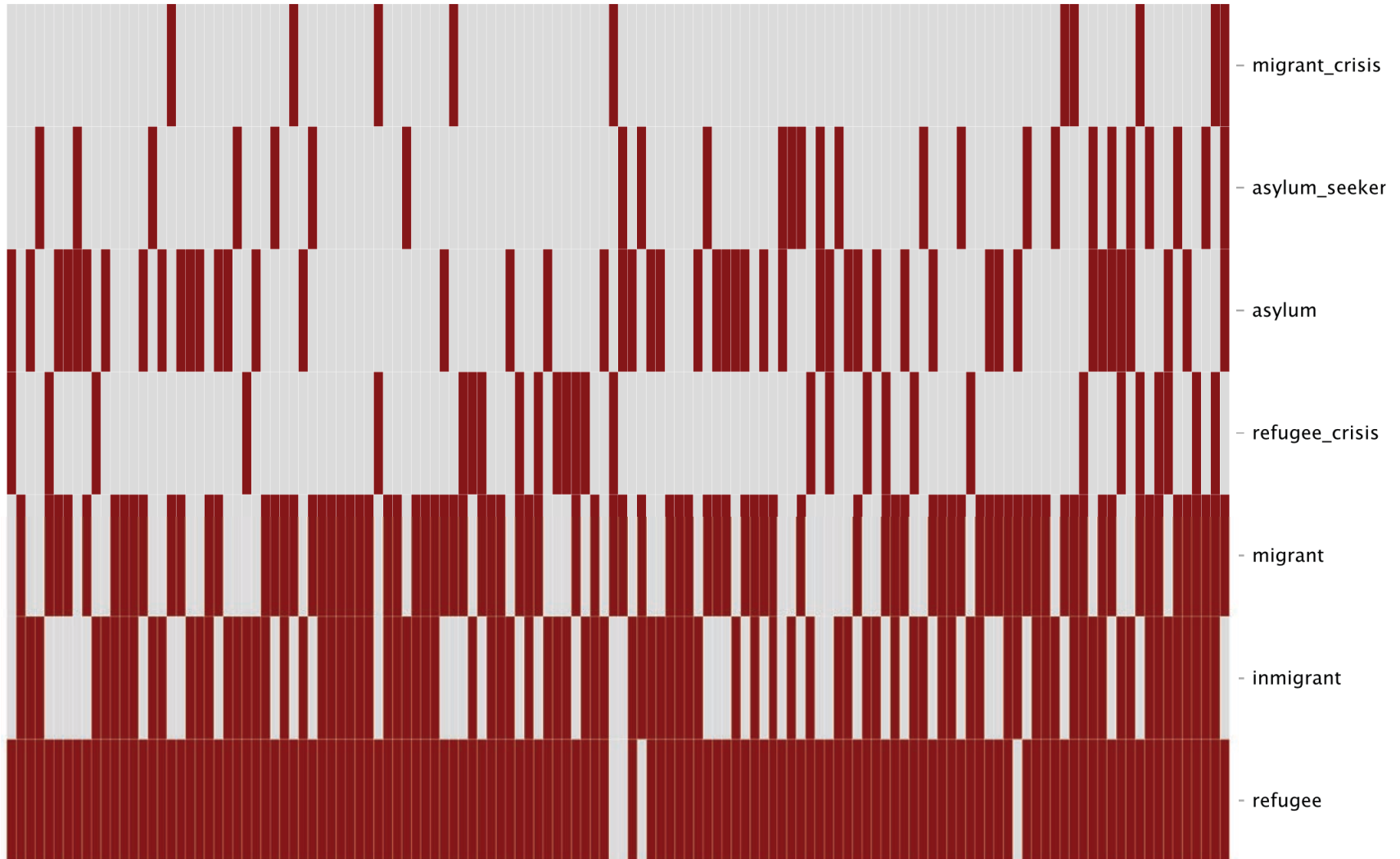
Migrant Crisis Comments:
next 5 days (11-15)
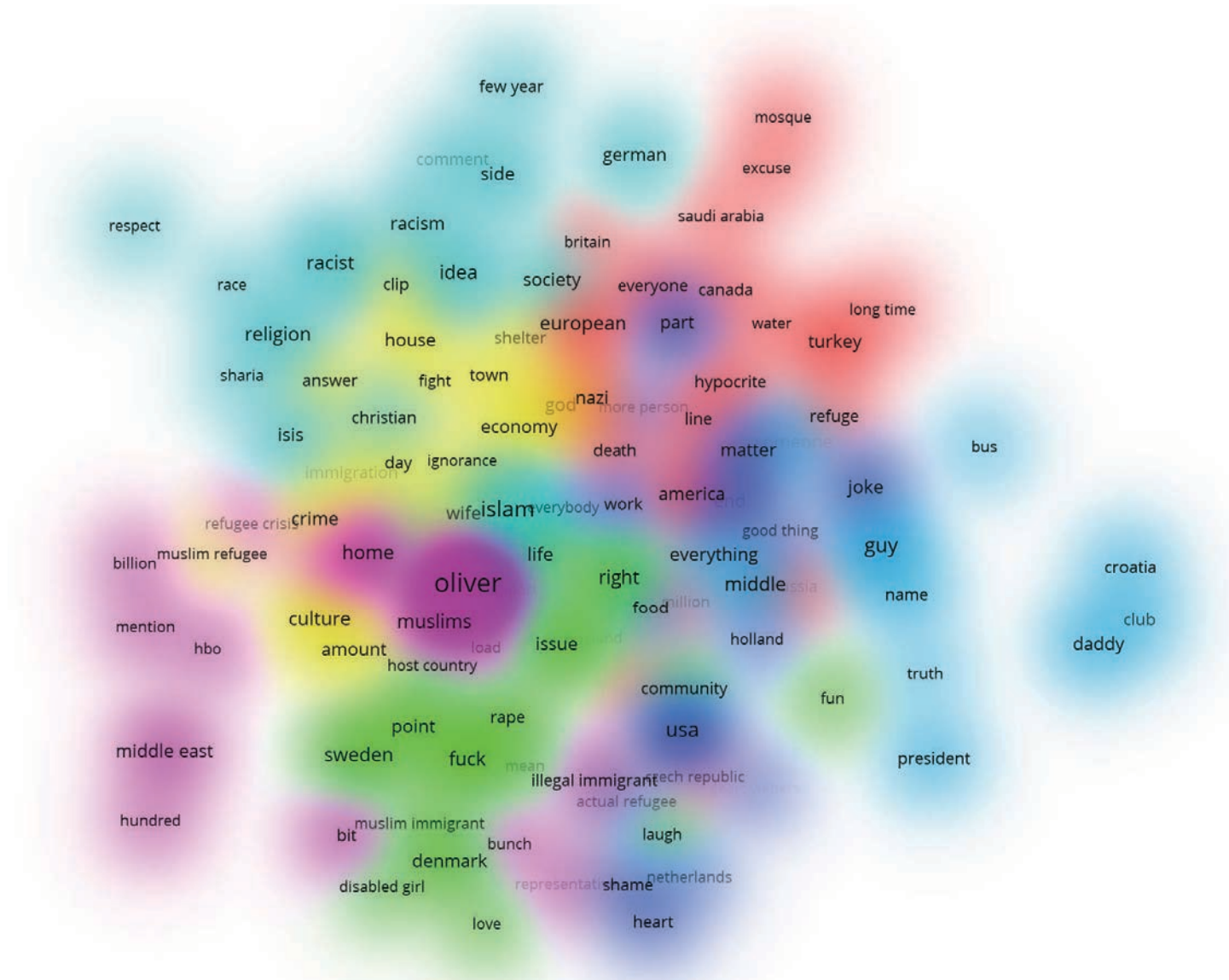
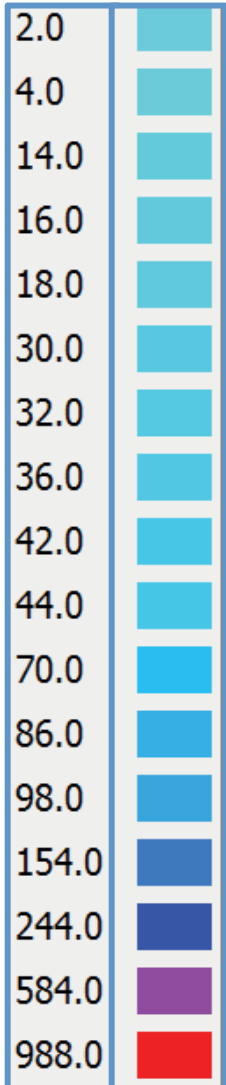# Asylum Seeker: Usage of key terms
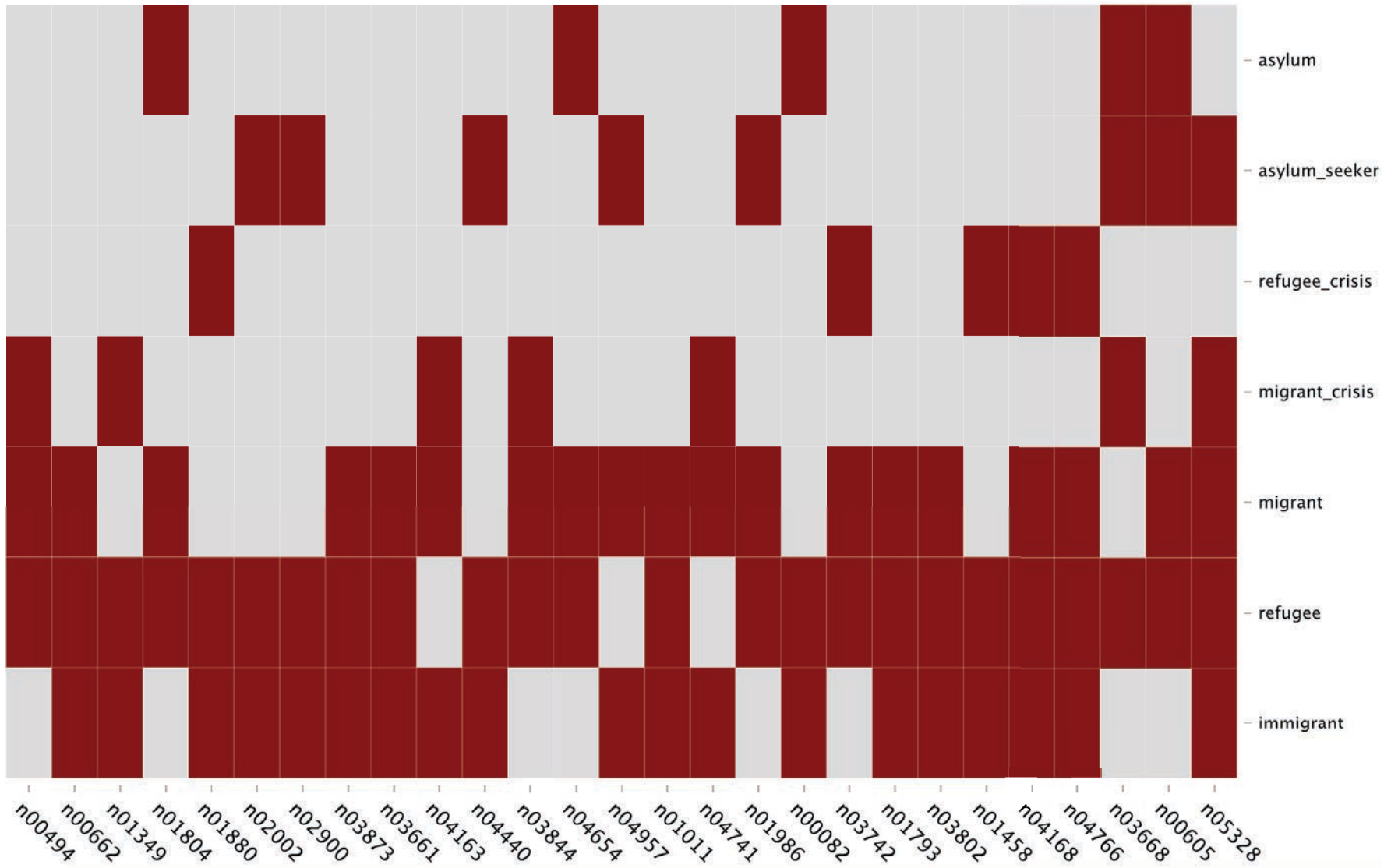
Migrant Crisis:
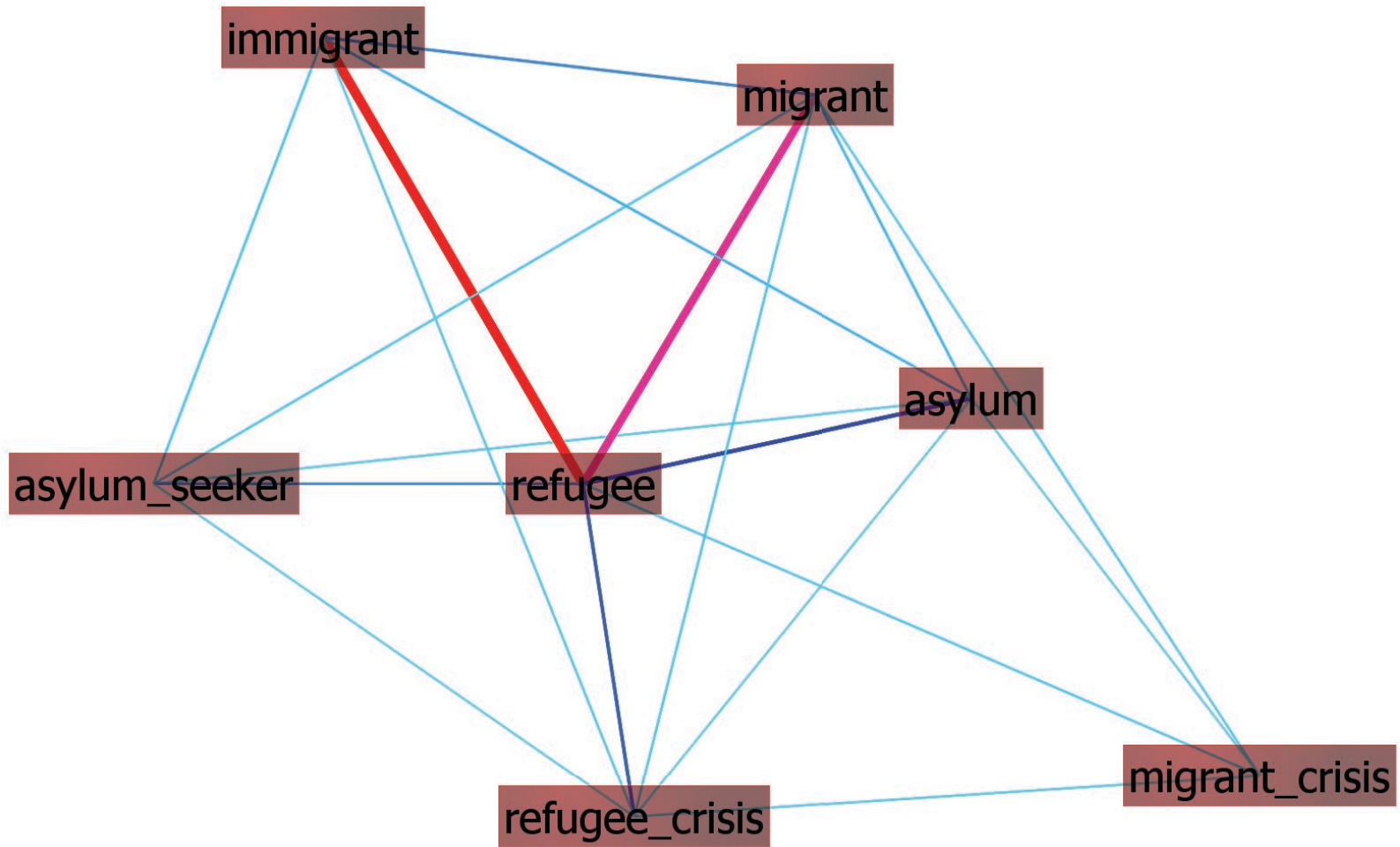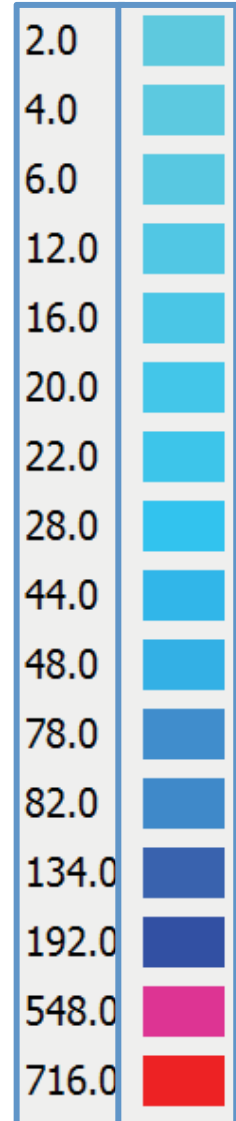# usage of key terms
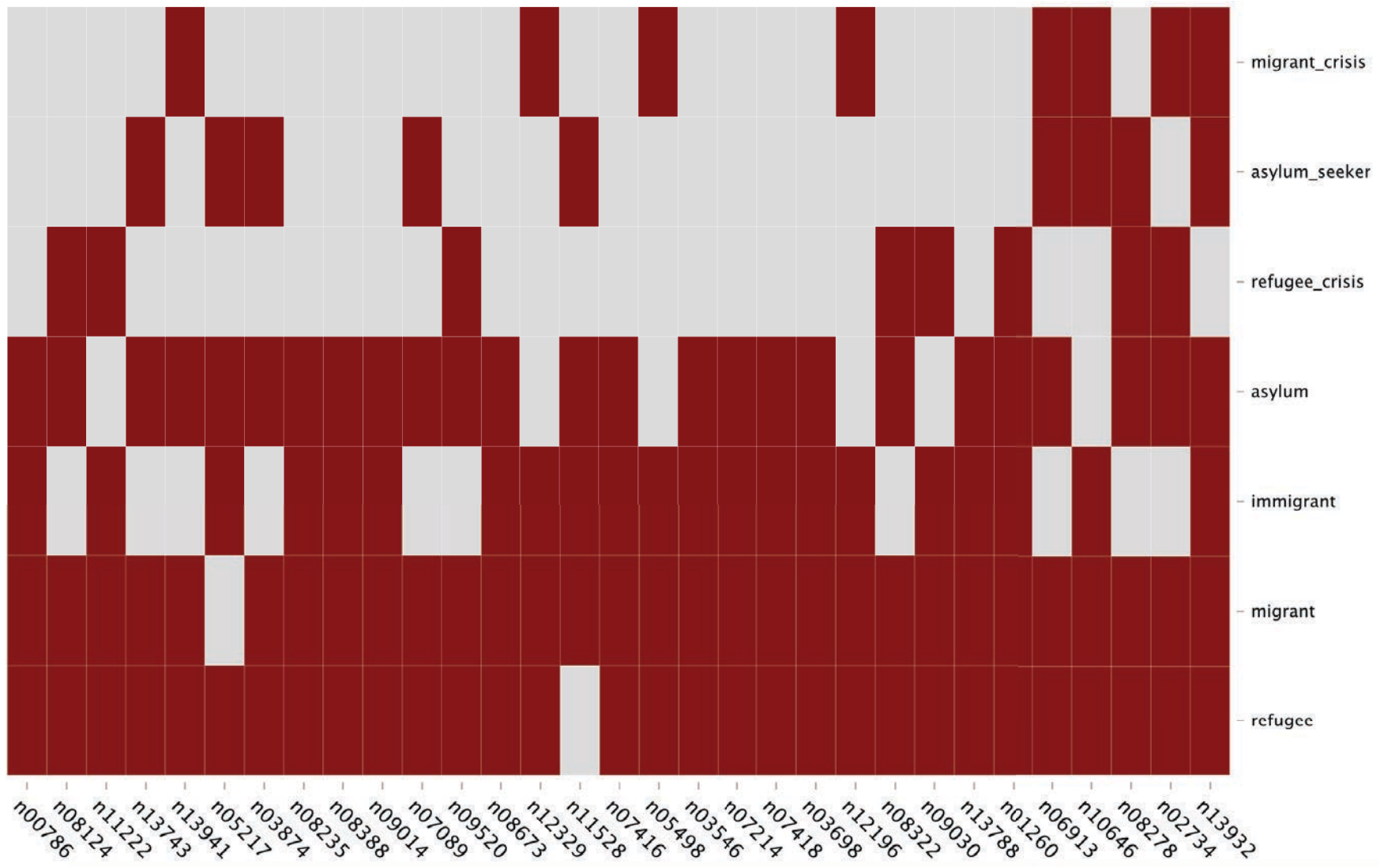
Refugee Crisis: usage of key terms

Asylum Seeker: key terms network
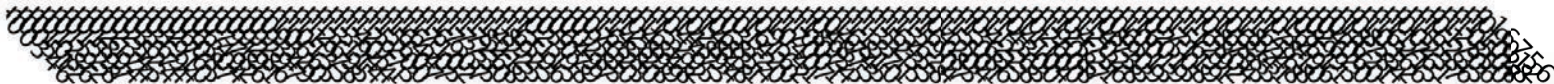
Migrant Crisis: key terms network
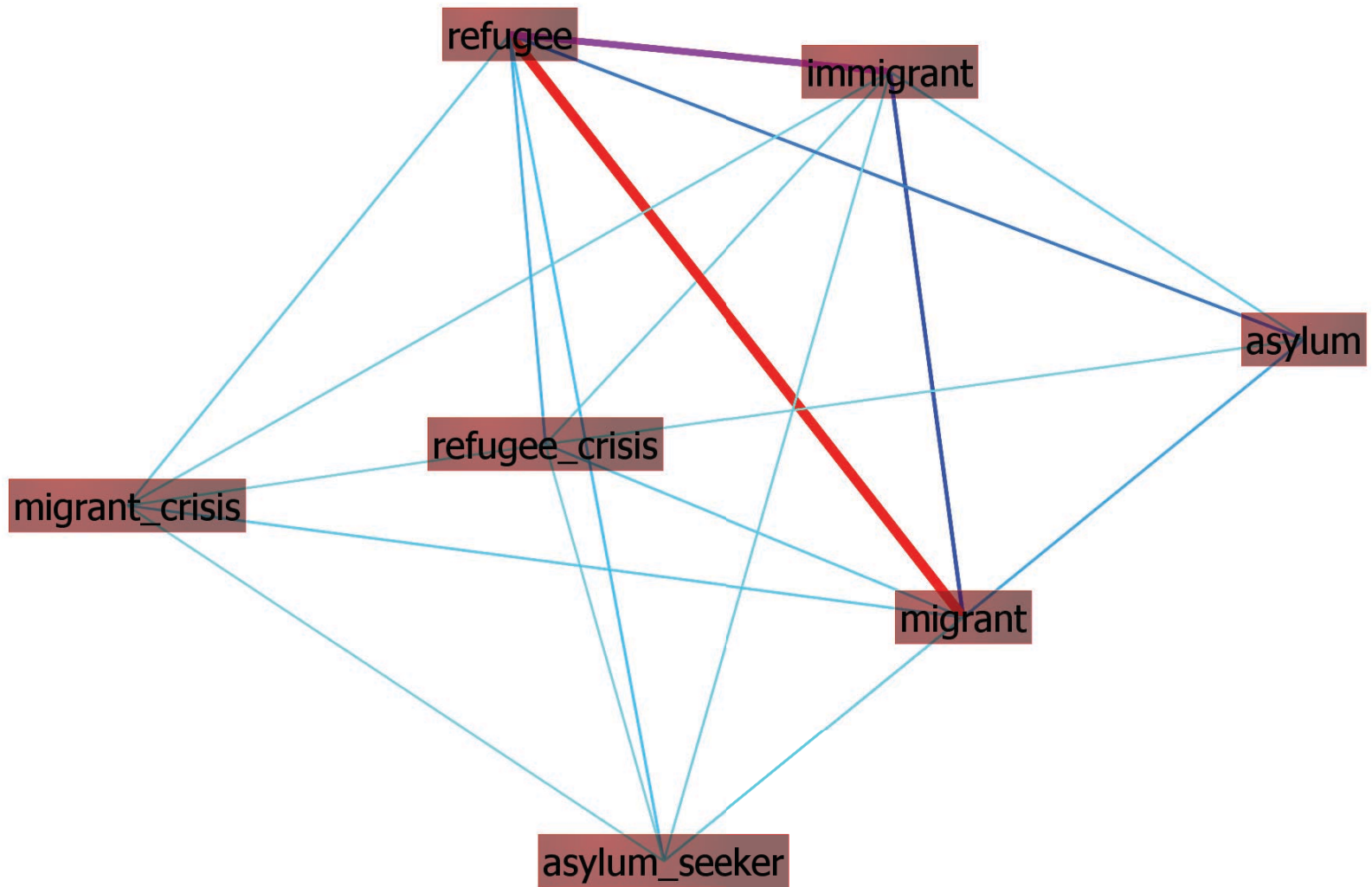
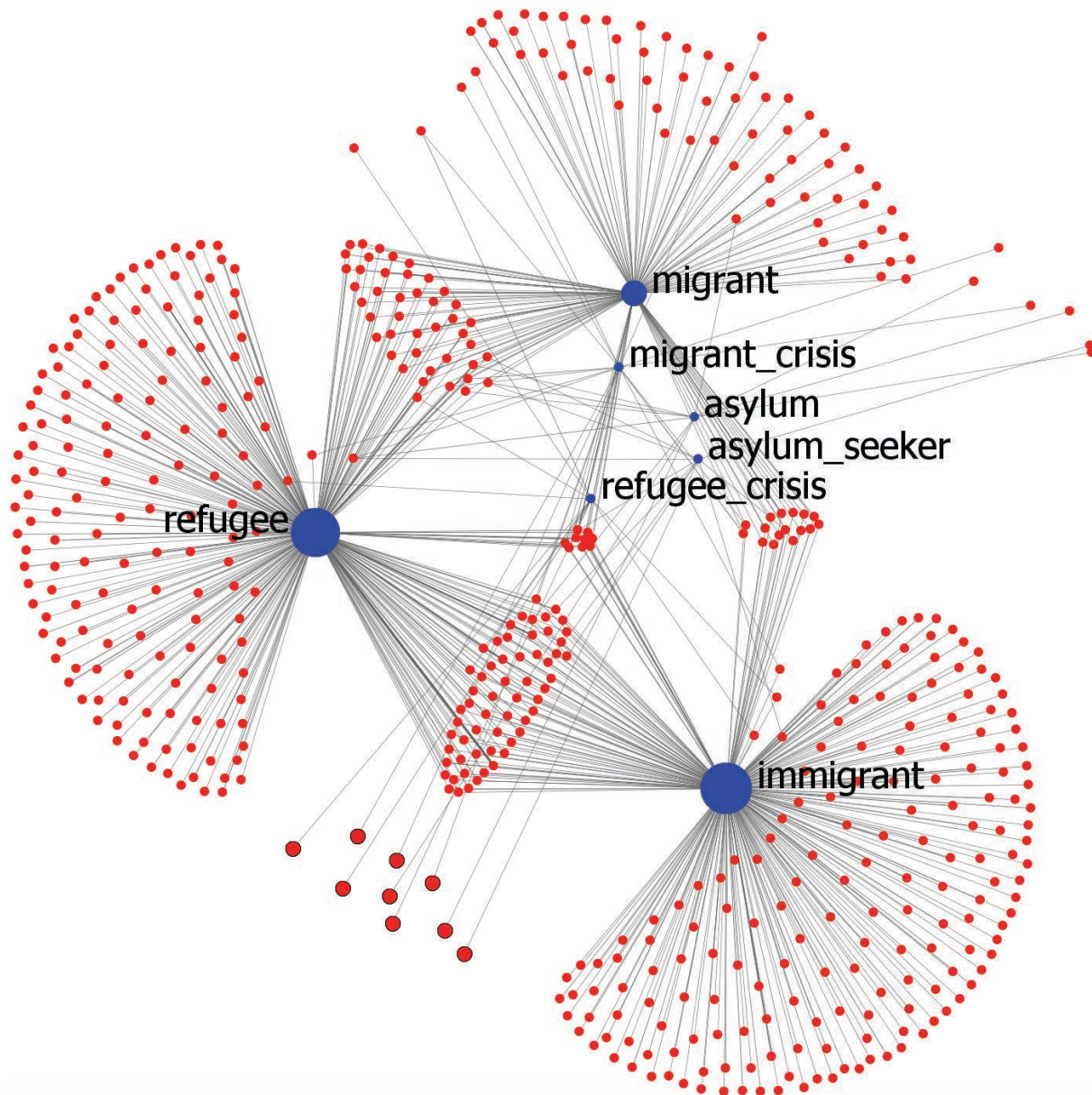# Refugee Crisis: key terms network

Asylum Seeker: Actors by Key Terms

n=546
e=708

Migrant Crisis:
Actors by key terms

n=1161
e=1579
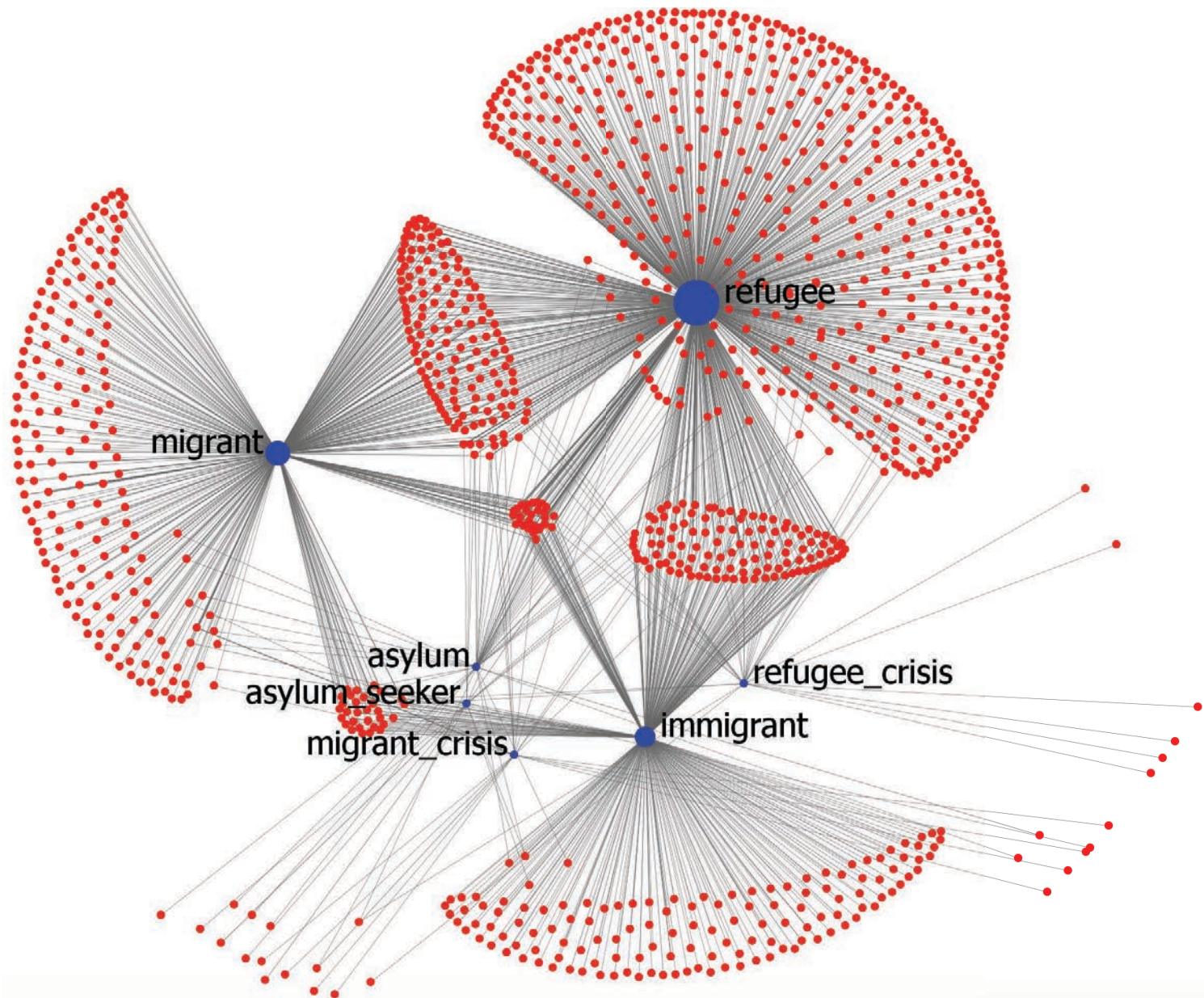
Refugee Crisis:
Actors by key terms
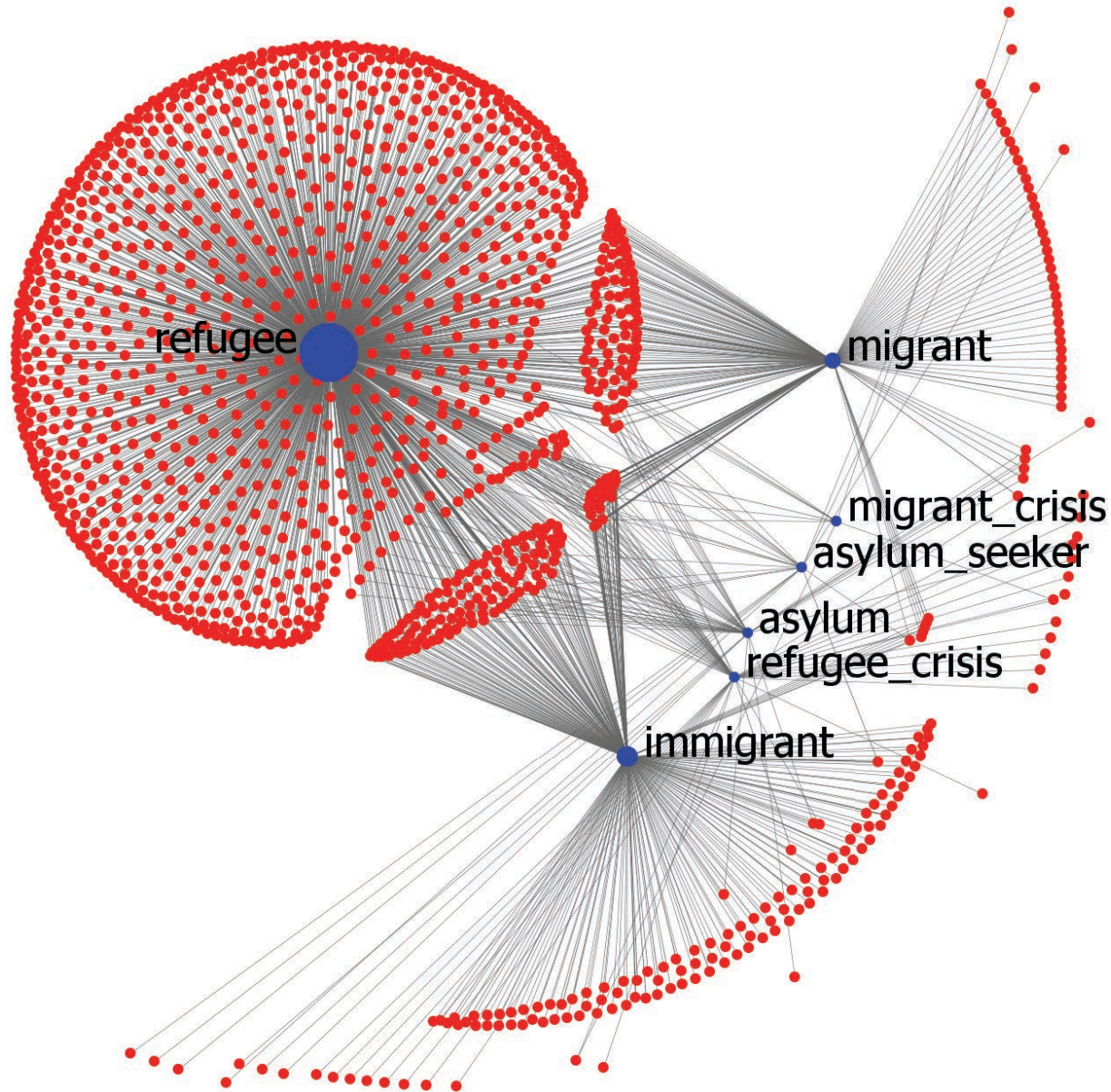
refugee

migrant

migrant_crisis
asylum_seeker

asylum
refugee_crisis

immigrant

n=1354
e=1688

Asylum Seeker Video

% of Total SUM(Number of Records)

0.02% — 13.65%

Migrant Crisis Video

% of Total SUM(Number of Records)
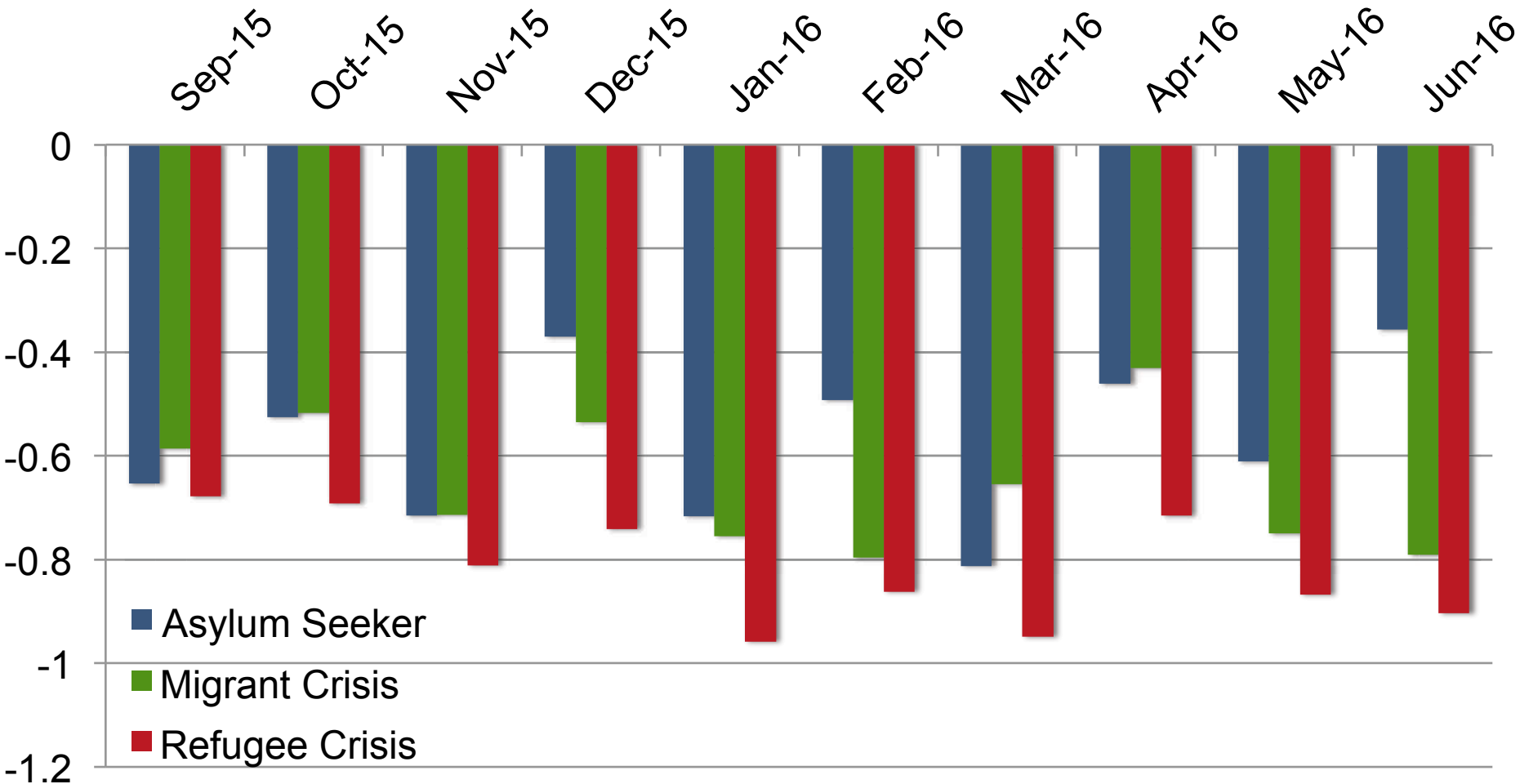
0.02% — 12.46%

Refugee Crisis Video

% of Total SUM(Number of Records)

0.01% — 14.66%

-1 (not negative) to -5 (extremely negative),
1 (not positive) to 5 (extremely positive)

Sentiment over time

Based on SentiStrength: $\frac{(positive - 1) + (negative + 1)}{number\ of\ comments}$

In sum

- Variations in key term use across categories;

- "Refugee" remains the most popular label, regardless of video category

- Actors use multiple labels in a single comment

- Refugee, migrant and asylum seeker became interchangeable terms (to some extent);

- Dynamics of conversations: topic emergence

- Mostly neutral sentiment in comments, regardless of category

  - Not many very expressive comments (i.e., high positive or negative sentiment strengths)

- Do people to choose to only view only videos they agree with, hence avoiding any genuine debate or alternative perspectives? (Sunstein, 2007).

- Does the public nature of comments restrict expressiveness?

Future steps and challenges

- Patterns:
  - uses of these labels
  - topic emergence
- Sentiment dynamics
- Labels as indicators of sentiment?
- Lots of misspellings in the data – spell checker?

Thank you for your attention!

Questions?

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