

TMTA: Motives for Immigration

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Topic Modeling Tool

Topic Modeling Tool is a system that uses Mallet, a package of java code to gather clusters of words in large body of texts. These clusters represent the prevailing themes/topic in the text.

Essentially, “[it] is an attempt to inject semantic meaning into vocabulary.” (Shawn Graham, Scott Weingart and Ian Milligan, 2012).

The final results of the Topic Modeling Tool look something like this:

List of Topics

1. government held politics arms directly president military readmitted doors realized
2. university chile form hand entrance sensation multitude year crowds enter
3. began body speak receiving lie assure maintain accept dining home
4. classmates read day gave future political reasons resume clean boulder
5. soldiers list room waited student line fear passed guns main
6. soldier country programs finish identification hands detained degrees support hoped
7. felt told street knew paper friends asked women studies years
8. students live sign wallet blouse legs conditions talk desperate walked
9. didn allende life free nightmare arm waiting ended dream remain
10. front filled future separated secret corner approached announcement terrible realize

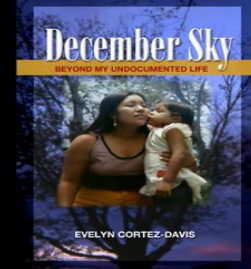
Background and Some Context

The Topic Modeling Tool is being used to identify and understand the motives for immigration in these particular nonfiction works. The objective of this project is to use TMT data to explore and identify any prevailing "topics" in Hispanic/Latino Literature, that discuss the motives or circumstances that make people immigrate from their native country.

The project team, will accomplish this through word association. They will make interpretations of the data produced by the Topic Modeling tool to question and explore immigration, and what drove these three women to leave their respective countries.

The text the Topic Modeling Tool analyze in this project are :

1. I Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Women in Guatemala (Guatemala-United States)
2. Amigas:Letters of Friendship and Exile (Chile-United States)
3. December Sky: Beyond my Undocumented Life (El Salvador- United States)



TMT Comparison: Rigoberta Menchu: an Indian Woman in Guatemala

Prior knowledge/ Read text:

Legend:

Military/political

Economic

Violence

Semantics

List of Topics

1. nightmare identification guns waiting directly thought military cheeks promises perspiration
2. response roll retrieve survive behavior fortunate hand protest humiliation dared
3. country life walled conditions ended dream afraid dragged grab disappeared
4. friends separated approached uncertainty realize immediately nonpolitical participated hand bear
5. receive allende arm legs finished accepted form received punished hallways
6. future front sensation reasons declaration communicated centimeter suffered disconnect telephone
7. room body didn women secret referring leftist form accept december
8. students line free corner streets began process uncertain connect chilean
9. soldiers list read held sign main readmitted resume clean finally
10. told student politics support hoped names covered began sheet absolutely
As in Executive order, possibly.
11. paper chile felt furiously bodies patios feel deepest orders shouldn
12. classmates fear street asked multitude doors familiar macula stories supported
13. students closed detained political facing friday imagine wearing petrified distrust
14. live years day documents acknowledge permitted grabbed member study arrest
15. knew programs year salvador assure moment thing walls obligations overwhelmed
16. government waited finish hands passed service remain loudspeaker receiving boulder
17. soldier felt talk records days heartsick home group single trouser
As in military service, possibly.
18. gave studies realized signed tormented copy added abandoned led marks
19. blouse entrance president fears walked raised fighting stop loyal lie
20. university arms announcement desperate generation terrible joined needed full made

Political Environment : Guatemalan Civil War and Campaigned to have political and military establishment tried in Spanish courts. Also fought for the rights of indigenous people.

TMT Comparison: Rigoberta Menchu: an Indian Woman in Guatemala

No prior knowledge/ Never read text before:

Legend:

Political / Military

Economic

Violence

Semantics

List of Topics

1. talk mother group criminal hot work washed church coming dreamed
2. suffering nicaraguan specific afraid wore orphaned grow strong affection live
3. remember lot heart imagine escaped companera tired change orphan situation
4. man young poor begun living thinking despair sign trust nun
5. told night task house afterward scold plucked food suspected guatemala
6. didn wished real surrounded madmen loose tied long kidnapped child
7. couldn things half room kill wanted working government tongue pretty
8. people time ill grief properly start strengthened alive looked hour
9. woman hair street priest fell covered valuable reach huehuetenango speak
10. thought army church father die live allowed knelt contribution jeep
11. market meant happened run discovered place awful worked death killed
12. life found wrong showed crazy shop die feeling fed cured
13. danger cake painful put struggle place spend secret carrying head
14. left suspicious cook eat back fact kidnap suspecting courage guatemalan
15. worried managed church town made enemy judicial finally morning community
16. nuns stay found asked pupils mistakes torture police indiscreet seminarist
17. wasn give don empty ve sleep worked nicaragua running coffee
18. house began longer case loved somoza find plate difficult plates
19. waited face places country side spoke consequences commitment yesterday recognize
20. moment knew wanted cowardice adjoined catch felt hide straight menchu

Lines 11 and 12 make me believe there is a war. Possibly because of poverty

TMT Comparison Amigas: Letters of Friendship and Exile

Prior knowledge/ Read text:

Legend:

Political / Military

Economic

Violence

Semantics

List of Topics

- nightmare identification guns waiting directly thought military cheeks promises perspiration
- response roll retrieve survive behavior fortunate hand protest humiliation dared
- country life wallet conditions ended dream afraid dragged grab disappeared
- friends separated approached uncertainty realize immediately nonpolitical participated hand bear
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- future front sensation reasons declaration communicated centimeter suffered disconnect telephone
- room body didn women secret referring leftist form accept december
- students line free corner streets began process uncertain connect chilean
- soldiers list head held sign main readmitted resume clean finally
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- knew programs year salvador assure moment thing walls obligations overwhelmed
- government waited finish hands passed service remain loudspeaker receiving
- soldier felt talk records days heartsick home group single trouser
- gave studies realized signed tormented copy added abandoned led marks
- blouse entrance president tears walked raised fighting stop loyal lie
- university arms announcement desperate generation terrible joined needed full made

Line 3 Describe the political Technique

In this TMT the semantics associated with Politics distinguish two political groups

Describe the way Chileans were reacting to the political situation

Political Environment: Occurs approximately after Pinochet coup overthrew Allende. Pinochet was committed to eliminating Marxism. He banned political activity and was ultimately a brutal dictator.

TMT Comparison Amigas: Letters of Friendship and Exile

No prior knowledge/ Never read text before:

Legend:

Political / Military

Economic

Violence

Semantics

List of Topics

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TMT Comparison December Sky: Beyond my Undocumented Life

Prior knowledge/ Read text:

List of Topics

1. school box robbers milady collapsed ticket silent laborers forbid horror
2. opened thieves shouting street charter states estimated thirty fleeing schoolyard
3. office hundreds tiny called driver held decade country bodies seamstresses
4. mother day blamed hate conditioned exhumed age artisans mute deaf
5. el hit hide presence trace maguey dead executed stand huts
6. year victims custodian made crawled left knee money rode human
7. sixty town path rest culture unseen family published women lay
8. life years gunfire eyes guatemalan world fate suffered secret single
9. panicked steel completely perfect matter subversive hamlets locked collaborators battalion
10. door military arms campus worked leave reminded innocent media existence
11. gate shots learned twelve surrounded unaware eighth plummeted shattered inside
12. boy driver hand week trouble expected warped happened recovered rights
13. knew dozen held describe finally accounted sad wiped farmers companion
14. time peaceful survivor focused town state mozote surfaced ruthlessness inches
15. ran class awaited horrible normal looked bleeding lodged direct refused
16. hitting number identity stabbed camps live shining agony reached blinded
17. hundred man entire young murdered mozote directly united image everyday
18. trained thousand classroom parents part ignore identities vivid past ghastly
19. bus town people side guard national stay war burst place
20. home teachers head desk bullets child learn paralyzed guerrillas trained

Line 4 sounds like political sentiments

Prior knowledge/ Read text:

List of Topics

1. school box robbers milady collapsed ticket silent laborers forbid horror
2. opened thieves shouting street charter states estimated thirty fleeing schoolyard
3. office hundreds tiny called driver held decade country bodies seamstresses
4. mother day blamed hate conditioned exhumed age artisans mute deaf
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16. hitting number identity stabbed camps live shining agony reached blinded
17. hundred man entire young murdered mozote directly united image everyday
18. trained thousand classroom parents part ignore identities vivid past ghastly
19. bus town people side guard national stay war burst place
20. home teachers head desk bullets child learn paralyzed guerrillas trained

Possible interpretation that the woman telling the story had recount a painful memory.

Legend:

Political / Military Semantics

Economic Violence

Political Environment: The Salvadoran Civil War, a conflict between military led Salvador government and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (an umbrella organization of a five left wing guerrilla group)

TMT Results

- The topic model tool allowed the project team to explore and consider different prevailing motives for each person to immigrate from their home countries.
- The member explanation for a TMT data analysis, illustrated that the dominant motives for “no prior knowledge” of the text were usually based on preconceptions on immigration.
- The explanation for a TMT data analysis with prior knowledge of the text reflected the historical information of the political and economic situation in the immigrant’s homeland.

Conclusion/ Next Steps

- By using the TMT data the way this project team did, researchers can identify and create meaning despite their different biases and interpretations.
- These different interpretations invited our team members to consider the validity of each conclusion drawn about the data found.
- Ideally, the next phase of this project would be for the members who have not read the text to look for scholarly sources that historically support the motives they feel caused these females to immigrate.
- Afterwards, the group members would read the text and see if the information they gathered identify a plausible motive for immigration. (The project group hypothesizes that this will rarely be the case)
- Ultimately, TMT can promote in depth discussions for research or can help develop a research project.