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Perception of others: Representation of immigrant groups in newspaper articles

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Abstract: Immigrants always have difficulties in integrating into a local society, and sometimes these difficulties come from the fact that they are subconsciously regarded as someone from the outside. How they are represented in the main stream media could reflect people's perceptions towards the 'otherness' of different social members. We analyzed the representation of 29 US immigrant groups in newspaper articles in 2 related studies. The favorability of an immigrant groups is highly associated with its perceived social distance (reflected through usage of concrete language) in our research. To further understand what caused the positive or negative image of immigrants, we applied Latent Dirichlet Allocation to identify topics associated with immigrant groups. We also investigated into how these news topics differ in terms of lingual social distance and favorability. The results provide both qualitative and quantitative insights in how the image of immigrants are reproduced in social media.