

RECSM Summer School: Social Media and Big Data Research

Pablo Barberá

London School of Economics

`www.pablobarbera.com`

Course website:

pablobarbera.com/social-media-upf

Discovery in Large-Scale Social Media Data

Overview of text as data methods

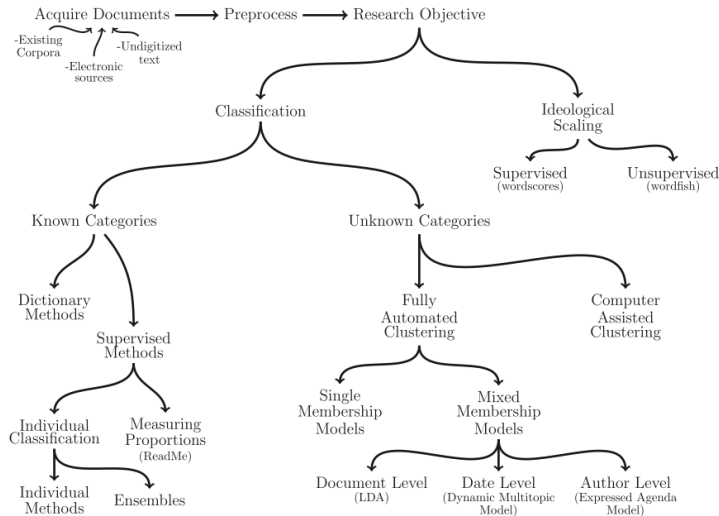


Fig. 1 in Grimmer and Stewart (2013)

Overview of techniques

- ▶ **Descriptive analysis:**

- ▶ What are the characteristics of this corpus? How do some documents compare to others?
- ▶ Keyness, collocation analysis, readability scores, Cosine/Jaccard similarity...

- ▶ **Clustering and scaling:**

- ▶ What **groups** of documents are there in this corpus? Can documents be placed on a latent dimension?
- ▶ Cluster analysis, principal component analysis, wordfish..

- ▶ **Topic modeling:**

- ▶ What are the main **themes** in this corpus? How do different documents relate to words differently?
- ▶ LDA, STM

Topic Models

- ▶ Topic models are algorithms for discovering the main “themes” in an unstructured corpus
- ▶ Can be used to organize the collection according to the discovered themes
- ▶ Requires no prior information, training set, or human annotation – only a decision on K (number of topics)
- ▶ Most common: Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) – Bayesian mixture model for discrete data where topics are assumed to be uncorrelated
- ▶ LDA provides a generative model that describes how the documents in a dataset were created
 - ▶ Each of the K topics is a distribution over a fixed vocabulary
 - ▶ Each document is a collection of words, generated according to a multinomial distribution, one for each of K topics

Latent Dirichlet Allocation

Figure 1. The intuitions behind latent Dirichlet allocation. We assume that some number of “topics,” which are distributions over words, exist for the whole collection (far left). Each document is assumed to be generated as follows. First choose a distribution over the topics (the histogram at right); then, for each word, choose a topic assignment (the colored coins) and choose the word from the corresponding topic. The topics and topic assignments in this figure are illustrative—they are not fit from real data. See Figure 2 for topics fit from data.

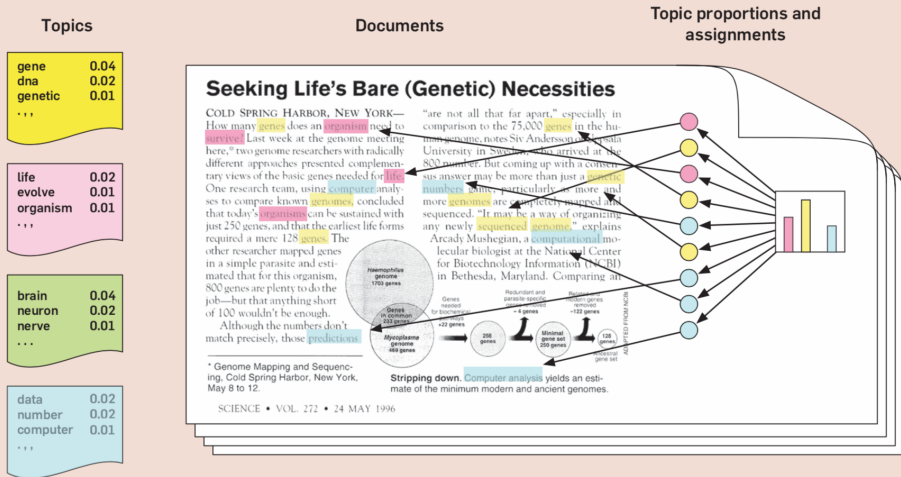


Illustration of the LDA generative process

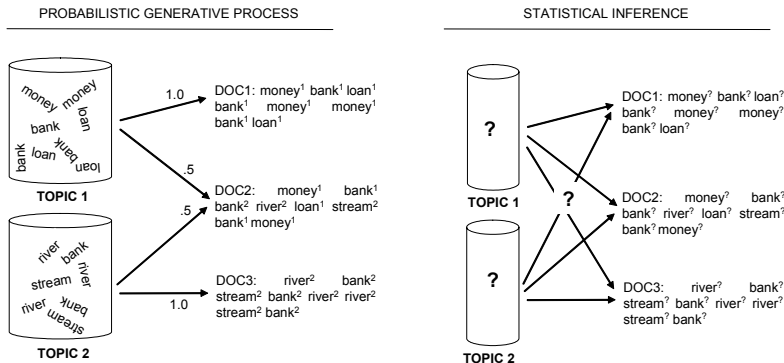


Figure 2. Illustration of the generative process and the problem of statistical inference underlying topic models

(from Steyvers and Griffiths 2007)

Topics example

Topic 247

word	prob.
DRUGS	.069
DRUG	.060
MEDICINE	.027
EFFECTS	.026
BODY	.023
MEDICINES	.019
PAIN	.016
PERSON	.016
MARIJUANA	.014
LABEL	.012
ALCOHOL	.012
DANGEROUS	.011
ABUSE	.009
EFFECT	.009
KNOWN	.008
PILLS	.008

Topic 5

word	prob.
RED	.202
BLUE	.099
GREEN	.096
YELLOW	.073
WHITE	.048
COLOR	.048
BRIGHT	.030
COLORS	.029
ORANGE	.027
BROWN	.027
PINK	.017
LOOK	.017
BLACK	.016
PURPLE	.015
CROSS	.011
COLORED	.009

Topic 43

word	prob.
MIND	.081
THOUGHT	.066
REMEMBER	.064
MEMORY	.037
THINKING	.030
PROFESSOR	.028
FELT	.025
REMEMBERED	.022
THOUGHTS	.020
FORGOTTEN	.020
MOMENT	.020
THINK	.019
THING	.016
WONDER	.014
FORGET	.012
RECALL	.012

Topic 56

word	prob.
DOCTOR	.074
DR.	.063
PATIENT	.061
HOSPITAL	.049
CARE	.046
MEDICAL	.042
NURSE	.031
PATIENTS	.029
DOCTORS	.028
HEALTH	.025
MEDICINE	.017
NURSING	.017
DENTAL	.015
NURSES	.013
PHYSICIAN	.012
HOSPITALS	.011

Figure 1. An illustration of four (out of 300) topics extracted from the TASA corpus.

(from Steyvers and Griffiths 2007)

Often K is quite large!

Latent Dirichlet Allocation

- ▶ Document = random mixture over latent topics
- ▶ Topic = distribution over n-grams

Probabilistic model with 3 steps:

1. Choose $\theta_i \sim \text{Dirichlet}(\alpha)$
2. Choose $\beta_k \sim \text{Dirichlet}(\delta)$
3. For each word in document i :
 - ▶ Choose a topic $z_m \sim \text{Multinomial}(\theta_i)$
 - ▶ Choose a word $w_{im} \sim \text{Multinomial}(\beta_{i,k=z_m})$

where:

α =parameter of Dirichlet prior on distribution of topics over docs.

θ_i =topic distribution for document i

δ =parameter of Dirichlet prior on distribution of words over topics

β_k =word distribution for topic k

Latent Dirichlet Allocation

Key parameters:

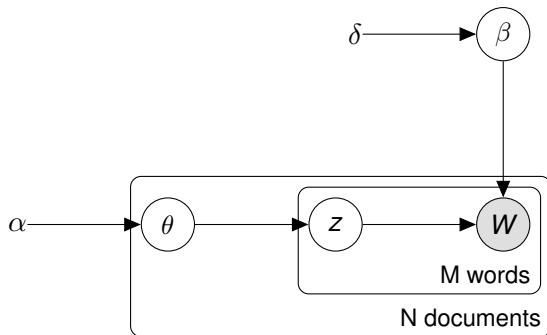
1. θ = matrix of dimensions N documents by K topics where θ_{ik} corresponds to the probability that document i belongs to topic k ; i.e. assuming $K = 5$:

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
Document 1	0.15	0.15	0.05	0.10	0.55
Document 2	0.80	0.02	0.02	0.10	0.06
...					
Document N	0.01	0.01	0.96	0.01	0.01

2. β = matrix of dimensions K topics by M words where β_{km} corresponds to the probability that word m belongs to topic k ; i.e. assuming $M = 6$:

	W1	W2	W3	W4	W5	W6
Topic 1	0.40	0.05	0.05	0.10	0.10	0.30
Topic 2	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.50	0.10	0.10
...						
Topic k	0.05	0.60	0.10	0.05	0.10	0.10

Plate notation



$\beta = M \times K$ matrix where β_{im} indicates $\text{prob}(\text{topic}=k)$ for word m
 $\theta = N \times K$ matrix where θ_{ik} indicates $\text{prob}(\text{topic}=k)$ for document i

Validation

From Quinn et al, AJPS, 2010:

1. Semantic validity

- ▶ Do the topics identify coherent groups of tweets that are internally homogenous, and are related to each other in a meaningful way?

2. Convergent/discriminant construct validity

- ▶ Do the topics match existing measures where they should match?
- ▶ Do they depart from existing measures where they should depart?

3. Predictive validity

- ▶ Does variation in topic usage correspond with expected events?

4. Hypothesis validity

- ▶ Can topic variation be used effectively to test substantive hypotheses?

Example: open-ended survey responses

Bauer, Barberá *et al*, *Political Behavior*, 2016.

- ▶ Data: General Social Survey (2008) in Germany
- ▶ Responses to questions: *Would you please tell me what you associate with the term “left”? and would you please tell me what you associate with the term “right”?*
- ▶ Open-ended questions minimize priming and potential interviewer effects
- ▶ Sparse Additive Generative model instead of LDA (more coherent topics for short text)
- ▶ $K = 4$ topics for each question

Example: open-ended survey responses

Table 1: Top scoring words associated with each topic, and English translations)

<p>Left topic 1: Parties (proportion = .26, average lr-scale value = 5.38) linke, spd, partei, linken, pds, politik, kommunisten, parteien, grünen, punks <i>the left, spd, party, the left, pds, politics, communists, parties, greens, punks</i></p>
<p>Left topic 2: Ideologies (proportion = .26, average lr-scale value = 5.36) kommunismus, links, sozialismus, lafontaine, rechts, aber, gysi, linkspartei, richtung, gleichmacherei <i>communism, left, socialism, lafontaine, right, but, gysi, left party, direction, levelling</i></p>
<p>Left topic 3: Values (proportion = .24, average lr-scale value = 4.06) soziale, gerechtigkeit, demokratie, soziales, bürger, gleichheit, gleiche, freiheit, rechte, gleichberechtigung <i>social, justice, democracy, social, citizen, equality, equal, freedom, rights, equal rights</i></p>
<p>Left topic 4: Policies (proportion = .24, average lr-scale value = 4.89) sozial, menschen, leute, ddr, verbinde, kleinen, einstellung, umverteilung, sozialen, vertreten <i>social, humans, people, ddr, associate, the little, attitude, redistribution, social, represent</i></p>
<p>Right topic 1: Ideologies (proportion = .27, average lr-scale value = 5.00) konservativ, nationalsozialismus, rechtsradikal, radikal, ordnung, politik, nazi, recht, menschen, konservative <i>conservative, national socialism, right-wing radicalism, radical, order, politics, nazi, right, people, conservatives</i></p>
<p>Right topic 2: Parties (proportion = .25, average lr-scale value = 5.26) npd, rechts, cdu, csu, rechten, parteien, leute, aber, verbinde, rechtsradikalen <i>npd, right, cdu, csu, the right, parties, people, but, associate, right-wing radicalists</i></p>
<p>Right topic 3: Xenophobia (proportion = .25, average lr-scale value = 4.55) ausländerfeindlichkeit, gewalt, ausländer, demokratie, nationalismus, rechtsradikalismus, diktatur, national, intoleranz, faschismus <i>xenophobia, violence, foreigners, democracy, nationalism, right-wing radicalism, dictatorship, national, intolerance, fascism</i></p>
<p>Right topic 4: Right-wing extremists (proportion = .23, average lr-scale value = 4.90) nazis, neonazis, rechtsradikale, rechte, radikale, radikalismus, partei, ausländerfeindlich, reich, nationale <i>nazis, neonazis, right-wing radicalists, rightists, radicals, radicalism, party, xenophobia, rich, national</i></p>

Note: “proportion” indicates the average estimated probability that any given response is assigned to a topic. “average lr-scale value” is the mean position on the left-right scale (from 0 to 10) of individuals whose highest probability belongs to that particular topic.

Example: open-ended survey responses

Fig. 6: Left-right scale means for different subsamples of associations with **left** (dashed = sample mean, bars = 95% Cis)

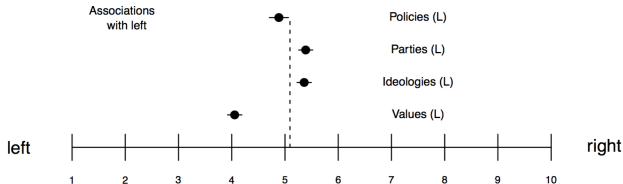
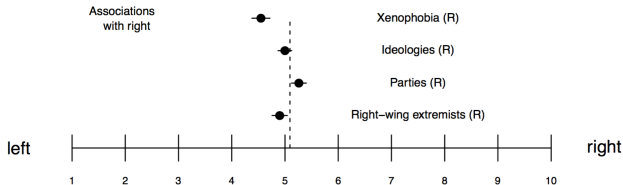


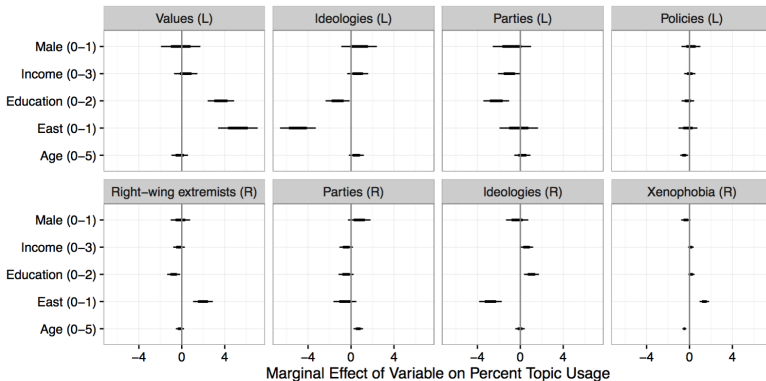
Fig. 7: Left-right scale means for different subsamples of associations with **right** (dashed = sample mean, bars = 95% Cis)



Bauer, Barberá *et al*, *Political Behavior*, 2016.

Example: open-ended survey responses

Fig. 9: Systematic relationship between associations with “left” and “right” and characteristics of respondents



Note: Each line indicates a 95% confidence interval (and 66% confidence interval in darker color) for the coefficient of eight different regressions of topic usage (in a scale from 0 to 100) at the respondent level on seven individual-level characteristics. The line on the bottom right corner (second row, second plot), for example, shows that individual a one-category change in age is associated with around one percentage point increase in the probability that the individual associated “right” with political parties.

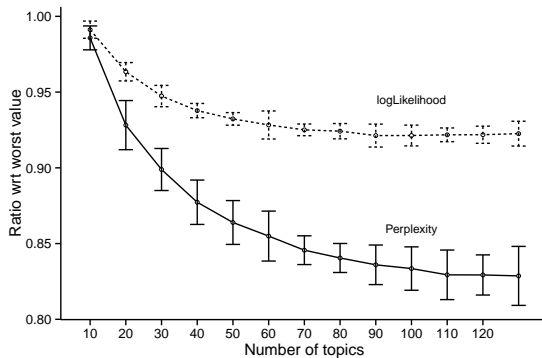
Bauer, Barberá *et al*, *Political Behavior*, 2016.

Example: topics in US legislators' tweets

- ▶ Data: 651,116 tweets sent by US legislators from January 2013 to December 2014.
- ▶ 2,920 documents = 730 days \times 2 chambers \times 2 parties
- ▶ Why aggregating? Applications that aggregate by author or day outperform tweet-level analyses (Hong and Davidson, 2010)
- ▶ $K = 100$ topics (more on this later)
- ▶ Validation: <http://j.mp/lda-congress-demo>

Choosing the number of topics

- ▶ Choosing K is “one of the most difficult questions in unsupervised learning” (Grimmer and Stewart, 2013, p.19)
- ▶ We chose $K = 100$ based on cross-validated model fit.



- ▶ **BUT:** “there is often a negative relationship between the best-fitting model and the substantive information provided”.
- ▶ GS propose to choose K based on “substantive fit.”

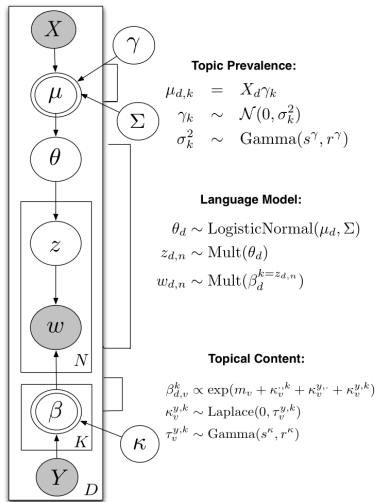
Extensions of LDA

1. Structural topic model (Roberts et al, 2014, AJPS)
2. Dynamic topic model (Blei and Lafferty, 2006, ICML; Quinn et al, 2010, AJPS)
3. Hierarchical topic model (Griffiths and Tenenbaum, 2004, NIPS; Grimmer, 2010, PA)

Why?

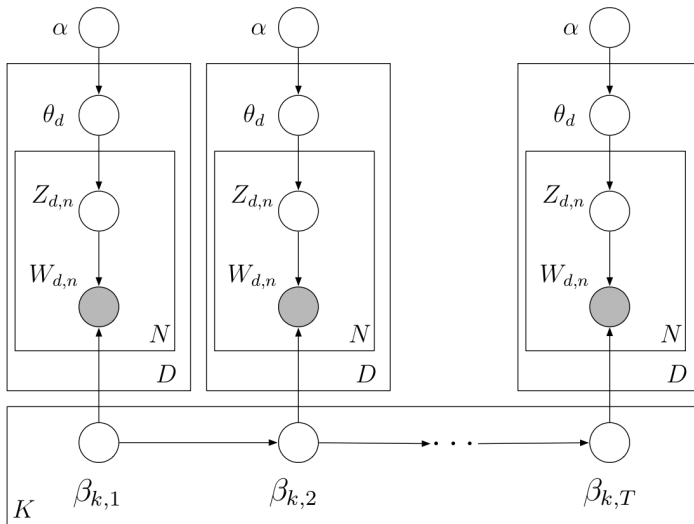
- ▶ Substantive reasons: incorporate specific elements of DGP into estimation
- ▶ Statistical reasons: structure can lead to better topics.

Structural topic model



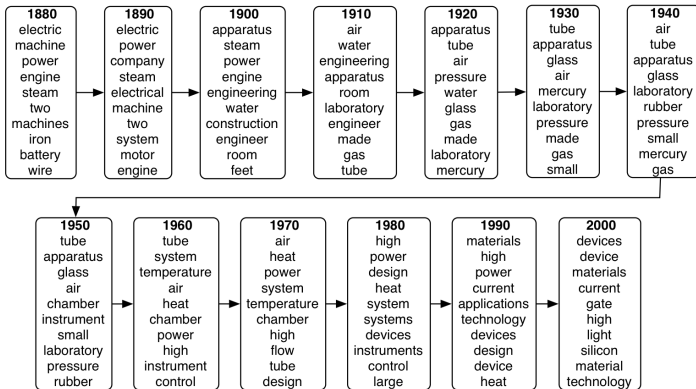
- **Prevalence:** Prior on the mixture over topics is now document-specific, and can be a function of covariates (documents with similar covariates will tend to be about the same topics)
- **Content:** distribution over words is now document-specific and can be a function of covariates (documents with similar covariates will tend to use similar words to refer to the same topic)

Dynamic topic model



Source: Blei, "Modeling Science"

Dynamic topic model



Source: Blei, “Modeling Science”

Figure 5. Two topics from a dynamic topic model. This model was fit to *Science* from 1880 to 2002. We have illustrated the top words at each decade.

