

THE REFUGEE CRISIS ON TWITTER: A DIVERSITY OF DISCOURSES AT A EUROPEAN CROSSROADS

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ABSTRACT

In the last decade, the European Union has approved and launched measures to promote Intercultural Cities, Diversity Management and the Integration of Immigrants in Europe. Despite this European framework, we are now at a crossroads between solidarity and humanity and an important restriction of refugees' human rights across Europe. In this paper, we try to compare the international approaches to the refugee crisis in different countries in Europe. Data were extracted from Twitter. We obtained thousands of tweets about "refugees", using this word in six different languages (English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish) from end November 2015 to 27 February 2016 as search strings. We performed a discourse analysis, focusing on the comparison between countries. A qualitative analysis with the help of both Atlas ti and T-Lab software was performed. The results showed a diversity of current discourses in Europe about refugees and the refugee crisis (from solidary to xenophobic ones), some of them very characteristic of particular countries or of local events experienced in these countries. These results allow us to reinforce the idea that we are at a key moment for the future development of Europe, especially regarding aspects concerning living together in cities and villages.

Keywords: Refugees, Twitter, Social Media, Discourse and Content Analysis.

JEL Classification: I13, J68, J69, R59, Z12, Z13, Z18, Z19.

1. INTRODUCTION

Migration management, especially management of the so-called refugee crisis, has become one of the main issues of political agendas. To the position that defends a management system of migration flows, another perspective has been incorporated, the goal of which is to meet challenges to achieve citizenship and integration for immigrants, manage changes in public opinion and mediate in conflicts linked to immigration (Cachón, 2007). For the European Union, and specifically for the Department of Migration and Home Affairs, the main objectives are to introduce a policy that will ensure economic, cultural and social growth in Europe, giving priority to the development of a secure, stable and respectful environment within the law and creating a common asylum policy based on solidarity, responsibility and the relationships between immigration and integration. At the same time, the construction of a secure Europe needs to fight terrorism and organized crime, promote cooperation policies and prepare an appropriate response to emerging crises (European Commission, 2016).

In an attempt to manage the dramatic situation prevailing in the Mediterranean, where thousands of refugees have lost their lives, the EU set a resettlement and relocation quota in which each Member State should take a certain number of refugees, agreeing to a solidarity

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distribution between countries. Thus, the pressure on the places of entry, such as Greece or Italy, will be alleviated. Although this appeared to be the dominant strategy in some parts of Europe, months after this agreement, the slowness of procedures, the refusal of some States to not accept more refugees, the establishment of a harsh policy of border control, and the refugee deaths and precarious living conditions in the camps (such as Calais or Idomeni) have further aggravated the situation, leading to debate on the vulnerability of asylum rights of refugees.

Finally, the European Union and Turkey (one of the main countries that restrain the flow of migrants) have signed an agreement whereby Europe will return to Turkey asylum seekers who arrive on the Greek islands. In exchange, the EU will accept Syrian asylum seekers from Turkey and offer other benefits, including an agreement on visa policy and the opportunity to reopen debate on Turkey's entry into the European Union.

Public opinion has not been indifferent to these events, expressing itself in social networks against European policies, showing concern for the human rights of refugees or otherwise expressing a rejection of the conditions in which migrants reach Europe and warning of the possible dangers that can result. Thus, social networking sites operate as digital communication tools which review, discuss, denounce, interact and share these events with other users. One of the most important platforms of online communication is Twitter, a microblogging service that has seen its popularity increase in recent years thanks to its ability to transmit rapid and direct messages, generate debate and mobilization, and group common issues through tags (hashtags) that connect users. Users also interact and talk to other users in Twitter.

2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL ISSUES IN THE EU FRAMEWORK ON REFUGEES AND IMMIGRATION

In the last decade, the European Union has approved and launched measures to promote Intercultural Cities, Diversity Management and the Integration of Immigrants in Europe. The Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration, agreed to in 2004, laid an important foundation. Integration and Refugees Funds were applied during these years through different programs. The latest policies have also given value to diversity management, which is an important framework through which to promote the integration of both refugees and migrants.

Diversity management is a broad concept and is not exclusively applied to migration studies. Several and very different studies have tackled this topic focusing on different approaches, such as gender, age, socioeconomic status, physical abilities, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, as well as race, ethnicity, or immigrant populations. Diversity management can be found within the framework of different kinds of organizations, from universities and schools to hospitals and other types of national and international companies. Some authors argue that diversity management is rooted in events that took place in the 1950s, '60s and '70s (social protests, civil rights, or liberation movements) (Brazzel, 2003). Others, such as Katrinli, Atabay and Gunay (2008), go much further back and find traces of diversity management in the Ottoman Empire. The current view is that diversity management was disseminated in the United States in the mid-eighties (Chinchilla & Cruz, 2011; Brazzel, 2003) in a context where important demographic and economic changes were taking place. The diversity management field was consolidated in the '90s (Brazzel, 2003). In Europe, the development of this concept can be traced to the late 1990s (Kamp & Hagedorn-Rasmusen, 2004).

Definitions of diversity management normally involve ideas such as recognizing and valuing of individuals, promoting the acceptance of individual differences (sometimes connected to our cultural background and family origin), and respect. Workplace diversity or managing diversity within organisations was developed through links to private companies, addressing the different benefits of managing diversity, especially those connected to productivity or 'the multicultural advantage' (Greenberg, 2004). Over time, other public and non-profit organisations became receptive to this idea and began to pay more attention to this topic. However, the approach was different in this case, being more directed towards achieving better inclusion and equity of diverse populations.

The introduction of concepts such as 'super-diversity' into the intellectual debate (Vertovec, 2007) underlines the importance of not reducing the idea of diversity to culture or ethnicity; indeed, in global societies, there is a continuous interplay between multiple axes of differentiation. Some of the factors cited by this author were: country of origin, ethnicity, language[s], religious tradition, regional and local identities, cultural values and practices, migration channel, legal status, migrants' human capital, access to employment, locality, transnationalism, responses by local authorities or services providers and local residents (Vertovec, 2007). When talking about refugees or immigrants in general, diversity has multiple origins, not only religious or ethnic.

A key issue concerning diversity management is posed by Giovannini (2004: 22), who addressed the importance of this concept as follows: "*Diversity is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another... Instead, the impact of diversity on group dynamics and productivity varies significantly depending on how well such diversity is managed*". His approach underlines the importance of the decisions and actions taken on by organisations and institutions. Other authors address the importance for organisations of legal obligations concerning diversity and underline the necessity of acquiring some kind of social conscience. In fact, lack of awareness of diversity has been addressed as a barrier to be overcome in this area of research, and it is within this context that ideas and experiences promoting cultural sensitivity and equality emerge and develop under the aim of achieving better social inclusion. Kamp and Hagedorn-Rasmussen (2004), for instance, wonder if the new concept of diversity management introduced and developed in Europe in the late 1990s would have an important role in influencing organisations to promote actions in favour of underprivileged groups. This could also be applied in connection to the refugee crisis. Furthermore, there are some studies that try to rethink and evaluate classical models for the integration of immigrants (assimilation, multiculturalism, etc.) as strategies for diversity management together with assimilation, multiculturalism or interculturalism (Moghaddam, 1993; Rodríguez-García, 2010).

Kamp and Hagedorn-Rasmussen (2004) also address the influence of context and strong institutions on diversity management. The recent relevance of diversity management in the European Funds for the promotion of research and actions (Eurofound, 2013) is noteworthy in this sense. The following quote is very explicit:

Valuing diversity is a core principle of Eurofound and one of the pillars of the European Union. Building a more inclusive EU is considered an essential element of achieving the Union's 10-year strategic goal of sustained economic growth, more and better jobs, and greater social cohesion. In its previous programs, Eurofound has undertaken work on combating discrimination, on the basis of gender, age, race and disability, both in and outside the workplace. In its ongoing work, the Foundation plans to focus on the identification of policies and concrete experiences aimed at: managing diversity from the perspective of competitiveness and productivity, and the improvement of working conditions for all workers: increasing social integration and, in particular, improving access to good quality employment, by promoting non-discrimination.

European policies turned towards diversity management in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy (European Commission, 2014). Here, diversity management became an important feature of 'inclusive growth', which is understood as the inclusion in employment of workers who are marginalised or excluded from the labour market, for one or more of their characteristics which are not related to their suitability for work'. The EU's growth strategy was designed to overcome the current economic crisis, and encourage diversity management in the workplace in the form of a conscious set of policies and practices developed in order to value workforce heterogeneity as an instrument that can help increase productivity and competitiveness. This strategy conceives diversity as an asset for companies (Eurofound, 2013; European Commission, 2014). The EU must now face new questions as a result of the new refugee crisis, which has come hand in hand with shocking events throughout Europe in the form of expressions of hate and racism towards refugees. These events have forced us to think about the difficulties in taking on the challenge of "diversity management" in an atmosphere where sometimes there is a sizable rejection of refugees and sometimes, by extension, of immigrants in general.

3. FRAMEWORK ON REFUGEES: INTERNATIONAL APPROACHES

International research on refugees and asylum seekers in the world has a long tradition, and has addressed the various problems raised by their condition. The most researched aspects include identity issues (Langellier, 2010; Cheboud, 2001), concern for refugee children (Levine 2007; Diab, 2010) and economic effects of refugees on the country of destination (Vecchio, 2016). All of these studies are focused on different parts of the world and, of course, different nationalities, such as Southeast Asian (Dubois, 1993) and North Korean refugees (Kim, 2010). The bibliography gives account of past and present international and national conflicts, such as the conflict in Iraq (Munem, 2015) and Syria (Charles & Denman, 2013), among others.

According to the 1951 Refugees Convention, *"the term "refugee" shall apply to persons that have well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it..."* (UNHCR, 2016: xx).

As stated in UNHCR (2015), in the event of mass displacement of refugees due to war or widespread violence, it is impossible to interview every individual for the recognition of refugee status; furthermore, it is senseless, because the causes of escaping from the country of origin are evident. In these cases, these groups are considered "prima facie" refugees, as is the case of Syrian refugees.

In fact, civil wars and violence in the Middle East have caused people of countries in conflict to leave their homes and move to neighbouring countries, such as Turkey or Jordan, to find shelter. However, the number of asylum seekers seeking refuge in Europe has been increasing and more and more people turn toward the old continent by land and sea to resume their lives or meet with relatives who are there.

The European Union is facing a decisive moment in which several policies must be mobilized to find a solution to this humanitarian crisis. In 2015 only, more than 300 000 people have risked their lives to cross the Mediterranean and over 3 000 have not survived the dangerous journey (UNHCR, 2015). This includes Aylan, a three-year-old child who died on the Turkish coast and whose photograph shocked public opinion. The photograph's

impact is still alive in the vindictive speech and support towards persons who are becoming refugees in a media spotlight that can no longer be ignored.

Since the appearance of that photograph, a series of events that have had a sizable influence on public discourse have occurred on the international scene. One of the most tragic was the November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, which killed more than 130 people and left more than 200 injured (Yárnoz, 2015) and the responsibility for which was claimed by the jihadist organization the Islamic State (Europe Press, 2015). International reactions of rejection to the attack and solidarity with the French was immediate and spread quickly through social networks such as Twitter, especially where the use of hashtags such as #JeSuisParis or #PrayforParis (in different languages) quickly became a trend. Recently we have had other similar reactions to terrorist attacks, such as #JesuisBrussels, #PrayforBrussels, or even #JesuisPakistan. In this climate of empathy for the victims, the finding of a Syrian passport near the location where one of the terrorists blew up his explosives belt further stoked tension on the reception of refugees in Europe.

After these and other events, public opinion has been divided, and in fact, in various European countries, demonstrations have taken place both for and against refugees. On the one hand, in Germany alone, there have been at least 1610 attacks against refugees and refugee shelters, including arsons and racist propaganda. In 2014, the number of attacks was 199 (Deutsche Welle, 2015). In addition, allegations of theft, threats and sexual abuse of nearly one hundred women in the city of Cologne by refugees on New Year's Eve again rekindled the debate on whether to accept more people into the EU. In Sonderborg and Haderslev (Denmark), several bars and clubs closed their doors to refugees for allegedly touting customers (Sputnik, 2016). And some political leaders have publicly expressed their rejection, even talking about an "organized invasion" by refugees (The Huffington Post/EFE, 2015).

On the other hand, there have been many initiatives of solidarity and assistance to refugees, many of them disseminated through social networks. Some initiatives have even involved major football teams that have decided to donate money to the cause. Other initiatives come from Spanish town councils that have decided to join a network of refugee cities, as cities offering to accommodate asylum seekers. Similarly, hundreds of volunteer workers have volunteered their time and efforts to help refugees both inside and outside their national borders. On Twitter, the hashtag #RefugeesWelcome accompanied thousands of messages clamouring for solutions and solidarity (El País Verne, 2015). Imaginative actions in support of refugees have also been recently developed, as is the case with Berlin Nightclubs organizing a Refugees Welcome party on Sundays to "raise money for pro-refugee organizations" (Telesur, 2016). These are just a few of the different strategies and mobilization actions trying to help refugees.

These events show that the refugee crisis not only matters to European policy makers. The European population also has a position on the matter, using communication tools that bring to use social media, specifically Twitter. An example of the ability to mobilize information on this social network was the demonstration on February 27, 2016, in over a hundred European cities. Known as the European March for Refugees Rights, it was organized with the aim of calling for routes and safe passages for refugees seeking to enter Europe due to public awareness of the drama that refugees carry on their backs. This march stands in stark contrast to the xenophobic attitudes that have appeared in some European countries (The Huffington Post, 2016). Under hashtags such as #27FPasajeSeguro or #SafePassage, thousands of groups, organisations and citizens have connected and interacted with other users thereby enabling wider mobilization. At the same time, discontent over the management of this humanitarian crisis was also spread via this tool, as was the desire for a more dignified and fair treatment for refugees.

4. OBJECTIVES

The aim of this paper is to compare international approaches to the refugee crisis in different countries in Europe through Twitter, and specifically, to identify the microdiscourses that appear around the string “refugees” in different countries. One main interest at this stage is the identification of the main public discourses disseminated through Twitter. What narratives and what kind of positive or negative images and social representations are transmitted to the audience? The implications of our results are clear for intervention and policy making.

In summary, we attempt to discover patterns in the recent discourses on refugees and delimit the types of messages that are disseminated through Twitter throughout Europe. Do the discourses, images and social representations disseminated by Twitter offer information that aids in the interpretation of the intervention of different actors (NGOs, politicians, activists, citizens and media) on Twitter? Do they allude to slogans, places, dates, people, or do they allude to something else? Additionally, through this research, we wish to obtain a better understanding of activity on Twitter in relation to social and political campaigns related to the defense of human rights.

5. METHOD

5.1. Data collection, filtering and data processing

Data for this article were extracted from Twitter, from which we collected more than 300,000 tweets about “refugees”, using as search strings this word in six different languages (English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish) from 14 December 2015 to 27 February 2016. We mined data every day during the selected period with the help of NodeXL Professional³. The extraction of tweets for this article began on 14 December, 2015, after the Paris Attacks to 27 February, 2016, day in which an international campaign took place around the hashtag “SafePassage” and whose aim was to defend human rights for refugees. Two and-a-half months were covered. During that period, samples were collected every day.

As a step prior to the discourse analysis, we applied different strategies for filtering, transforming, and coding data, focusing on the comparison between countries. Qualitative analysis and some quantitative description with the help of Spss, Atlas ti and T-Lab software were also performed.

5.2. Basic description of final dataset

Our final dataset, which did not include retweeted messages, was composed of 82,573 original tweets. The initial extraction produced a very long list of tweets, including mentions and retweets (RTs), which were deleted for this analysis, considering that a Retweet repeats the content. Even though retweets give a better idea of the dissemination and scope of a tweet, the original tweet allows for a better identification of different discourses without this distortion. In future works, more focus on the scope of tweets will recover this information. A majority of tweets included pictures or links to URLs. The dataset included original tweets in German (31.467, 38.1%), English (29.191, 35.4%), Spanish (12.943, 15.7%), French (7.003, 8.5%) and Italian (1.969, 2.4%) in particular, perhaps because these languages are more widespread in the world (English-Spanish), because there is a greater centrality of Germany surrounding the decisions and events concerning the refugee crisis or maybe due to the interest or lack thereof by communities in Twitter.

³ NodeXL Pro Website: <https://nodexl.codeplex.com/>.

6. IDENTIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL DISCOURSES ON REFUGEES

The refugee crisis and the events surrounding it have captured great attention in Europe and other places around the world. An initial analysis of the discourses disseminated through Twitter allows us to distinguish among several orientations. Globally, the idea of “refugee crisis” is associated in the discourse to contents related to human rights or campaigns such as #safepassage, which are widespread globally.

In addition, the discourses around refugee crisis incorporate the actions and decisions that European governments are taking to confront the crisis during the studied period: countries’ decisions, agreements, etc. The main political leaders (especially Merkel) surrounding these events are also mentioned, as are places in border areas or in areas of conflict (Turkey, Greece). The refugee crisis is presented as a great challenge for Europe, but it is also seen as an important crisis with unpredictable consequences.

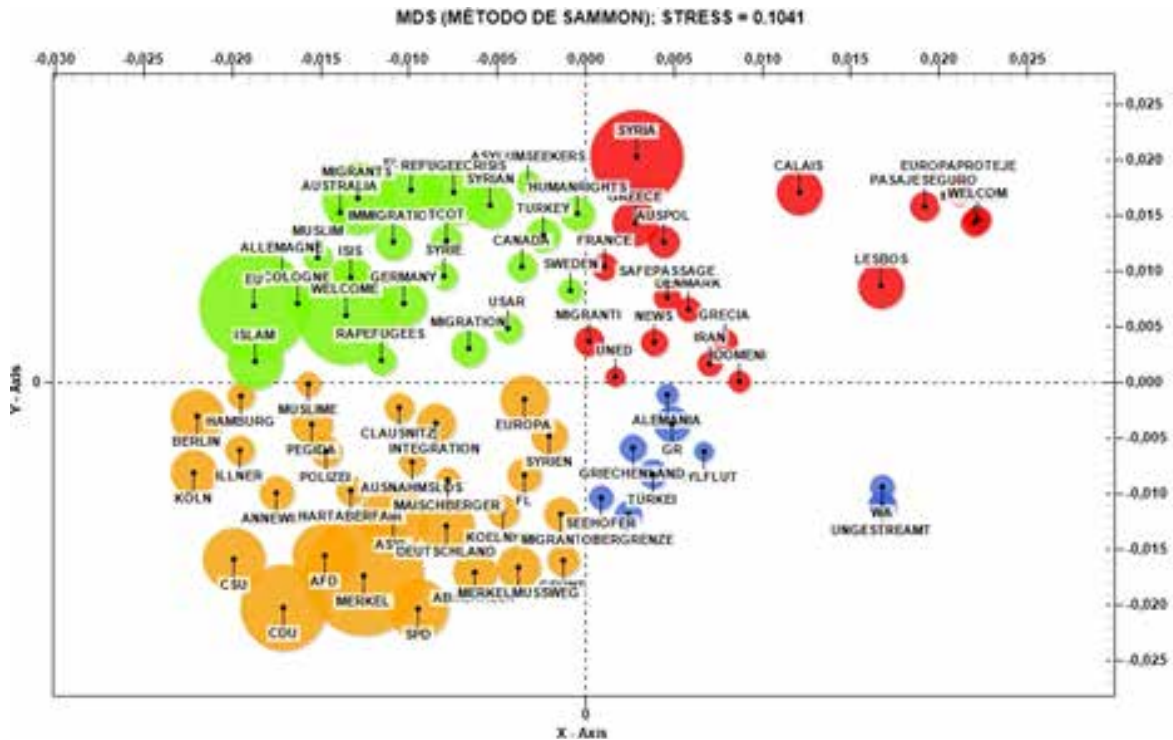
The following is a list of some of the discourses representative of the hashtag #refugeecrisis:

- 17/12/2015. #MigrantCrisis is pushing #Germany to brink of #CivilWar and #anarchy #refugees #terrorism #immigration
- 19/1/2016. #Refugees crisis in #Europe is fake; European Govs are looking for a reason to send them back home! Then STOP supporting #ISIS refugees europe isis
- 16/12/2015. How is anyone able to stand by and watch this #humanitarian crisis unfold? #refugees humanitarian refugees
- 29/12/2015. “#Shameful #Denmark plans to take jewellery from #refugees as “only way to afford resettling them in asylum centres””
- 26/2/2016. La respuesta racista contra los #refugiados es la verdadera crisis de la vieja Europa.

The discourses are also critical towards European governments, considering that they are not doing their best to solve the refugee crisis, especially regarding their passivity and slowness in welcoming refugees. In addition, there is a very critical focus on the violation of human rights. The drama is also reported through the history of people that died during their journey to Europe, comparing this crisis to the Second World War.

The following figure, built with T-Lab 9.1.4, presents a summary of hashtags contained in the 82,573-tweet corpus under analysis, and it is a first presentation of how some discourses are interconnected and how others follow a different dynamic. Below, we clarify some of the discourses contained here with the complete series of tweets, not only the hashtags. The figure shows how the hashtag #refugeecrisis is linked to other discourses on human rights.

Figure 1. Hashtag Map, classified by Coseno, as an association indicator of co-occurrences



Source: Authors, dataset described in methods.

Map built based on association indexes used to analyse co-occurrence of lexical units in their context.

7. POSITIVE DISCOURSES ON REFUGEES: #SAFE PASSAGE, #HUMAN RIGHTS, AMONG OTHERS

Public discourses found in Twitter present refugees in a positive and negative light. Some of the most positive ones are channelled through specific campaigns in support of refugees. This can be clearly observed through several closely related hashtags at the top right part of figure 1. In addition, considering the complete series of tweets, other keywords extracted after a qualitative codification through Atlas ti were found sharing a same context and positive discourse:

*Safe Passage - Pasaje seguro – Europa Protege – Welcome – refugees crisis
Siria – Calais – Lesbos...*

Safe Passage represents the solidarity discourse supporting refugees and claiming social justice and the application of human rights. This label was disseminated through the European March for Refugees Rights on 27 February, 2016, with #safepassage (in different languages) as the slogan created to involve citizens with the cause, claiming safe passages for refugees. A similar discourse is found in other similar labels such as “#humanrights”, “#europaprotege”, “#welcome”, “#diversity”, “#humanity”, “#refugeeswelcome”, all of them interconnected and sharing similar ideas such as empathy and solidarity with refugees. In the case of #humanright, this hashtag is also a denunciation for the violation of refugees’ rights and also a strong criticism towards Europe for not giving appropriate and timely responses to this crisis, allowing the infringement of the rights of refugees.



Associated labels, from T-Lab



The following are additional examples of this type of discourse:

- 01/02/2016. It's not just Britain. Europe's response is morally unacceptable. #refugees #safepassage
- 01/02/2016. Cuanto tiempo más seguiremos mirando a un costado? Se necesita en forma inmediata un #pasajese seguro para #refugiados
- 17/12/2015. The EU is supporting the racist and murderous policies of Greece and Turkey who refuse #safepassage to #refugees. #RefugeeLifeMatters
- 19/1/2016. "The asylum seekers are detained and have not been given the possibility to appeal the decisions" Happens in #Norway! #refugees #humanrights
- 17/12/2015. Refugees won't destroy public services, but austerity will #refugeecrisis #WelcomeRefugees #HumanRights 4 #refugees
- 24/2/2016. Sumémonos y seámos la voz en #Europa de los #refugiados Por los #DerechosHumanos Por una #vidadigna
- 26/1/2016. #Europa empieza a dar un asco tremendo #DerechosHumanos #refugiados #DDHH #refugeeswellcome

8. OUR RESPONSABILITY TOWARDS CHILDREN: VULNERABILITY AND PROTECTION

The most impressive image associated with the refugee crisis was that of a child dead on a beach. #safepassage is also connected to this event. We found thousands of tweets referring to children (enfant, niños, kinder, etc.). We found lots of displays of concern connected to children. Somehow, all of them have to do with their vulnerability. Other arguments point out that they are the most affected by the crisis and that they are the main refugee crisis

victims, especially when they travel alone. Other concerns found in Twitter had to do with sex and organ trafficking. The death and disappearances of children are also issues of great concern.

We furthermore found discourses and declarations by NGOs as UNICEF showcasing their actions and activities geared towards the protection and education of children. The discourses regarding minors have a great sentimental component, including frustration, sorrow, anger and other emotions due to Europe's passivity:

- 16/2/2016. Dans l'affaire des 10.000 #enfants #réfugiés disparus, les États européens sont les premiers coupables.
- 01/02/2016. Es tan doloroso. Niños. No números. NIÑOS. Dónde está la ONU? #refugiados.
- 21/12/2015. 70 years on from World War II, the situation for children on the move through Europe looks eerily familiar.

Nevertheless, we also found negative discourses about refugees arguing that adult refugees are sometimes married with children in their countries of origin. Cases of children raped by refugees are also mentioned.

- 16/12/2015. #Muslim #Pedophiles Posing As #Refugees Bringing Their Child Brides Into #Europe.
- 01/01/2016. “#Sweden Accepts #Muslim “”Children”” as Old as 40..#Muslim adult #refugees pose as unaccompanied children. A farce.
- 29/12/2015. #Refugees in #Germany housed together. Men n #women n #children in same places. #Rape is rife. #SAVETHECHILDREN!



9. THE NEGATIVE AND WORRISOME SIDE OF DISCOURSES ON REFUGEES

Unfortunately, Twitter is full of negatives messages about refugees that erode the possibilities of integration and create a very negative image of them based on unfounded generalizations and racist orientations. Some of the discourses in the observed period have to do with Muslims and the Islam (religion) and attempt to stop their entry into Europe. There is also a metaphorical discourse concerning “invasion”, which includes messages such as “hordes of #Muslim” that at the same time are “Illegals” or sometimes even “terrorists”. This type of discourse clearly rejects refugees. Sometimes these discourses are supported by politicians such as Donald Trump or other organisations in Europe. These messages intend to generate a rejection towards refugees, and promote their expulsion or the prohibition to entry.

- 17/12/2015. The West must think twice before accepting thousands of Muslim #Refugees from Middle East.
- 02/01/2016. #Europe and #Britain still under invasion by hordes of #Muslim #IllegalImmigrant #Islamist “#refugees” in 2016...

- 16/12/2015. Temporary ban on Muslims is correct. ISIS promised 2 infiltrate #refugees. They don't bluff. #trump is RIGHT! #GOPDebate #trump2016

Enemies signify the possibility of invasion, fear and being in a state of alertness about something bad that will supposedly happen. In support of these ideas, we found the hashtag **#islamistheproblem**. Religion is currently mixed with a humanitarian situation where people are escaping from war. In this case, all refugees are supposed to be an Islamic collective. There is, furthermore, an essentialist idea of Islam at play, as something that cannot change. Islam is described through tweets as a religion that does not respect European values and as a religion that does not promote the peace. The problem, thus, is the religion, not the people. At the same time, however, refugees are classified as Muslim.



#islamistheproblem has a direct connection to the discourse surrounding **#RefugeesNotWelcome** (criminality, rape, invasion, etc.). However, it adds terrorism to the mix as it conflates terrorism and refugees and thereby introduces suspicion. There are also some hashtags such as **#ISIS** that contribute to this sentiment.

Central to the discourse about **#refugeesnotwelcome** is the idea of expelling refugees from Europe, not only for being refugees but for being Muslims in particular. The two components are thrown into the same box. Fears regarding a hypothetical invasion or *reconquista*, and the idea of losing control of the situation also play a role. Some tweets suggest that refugees behave in an uncivilised way (they are criminal, rapists) and show false passports. They are also seen as a burden for the country. The majority of these tweets are in German and include **#PEGIDA** or other messages and hashtags against Islam, such as **#BanIslam**, **#Islamistheproblem**, or those directed to politicians, such as **#Merkelmussweg**. Regarding **#raperefugees**, there is another series of tweets that do not contribute to pacific coexistence in Europe. These are messages that elicit over-alertness, stereotypes, as well as anger directed towards refugees and are well documented in Twitter.

10. CONCLUSIONS

After 27 February 2016, the date for which our data series ends, news and tweets about the refugee crisis have continued and the challenge for Europe of finding a solution to the crisis within a human rights framework continues. The latest news on the refugee situation is not especially good for them. Furthermore, social conflicts are still at play. We need to think more deeply on the consequences of this crisis for Europe.

Our results showed a diversity of current discourses in Europe about refugees and the refugee crisis (from solidarity to xenophobic ones). Some of them were very characteristic of concrete countries or local events that took place in these countries. However, we also

discovered commonalities in the discourses, both in the humanitarian and the rejection side. Maybe the most distinctive thing that we found through this approach is the frequency of negative discourses in the German language. As a next step to our study, we will try to localize these negative orientations, attempting to ascertain their origin. These results allow us to reinforce the idea that we are at a key moment for the future development of Europe, especially with regard to aspects concerning coexistence in cities and villages. Thus, a new idea for diversity management that explicitly takes into account what is happening with regard to the refugee crisis seems to us of great importance. On the other hand, there are direct and also frequent religious attacks through Twitter, specifically towards Islam, frequently connecting religion to terrorism, which are very different things. This particular behaviour on Twitter is a clear reflection of what is happening in society, if we pay attention to everyday news. If European cities and villages look to a peaceful coexistence, respecting diversity, they will need to take all these events seriously and adopt measures, as racism and xenophobia emerge and consolidate very easily from these types of scenarios.

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