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Refugee Crisis
– *Between EU Identity and Eurocentrism*

ABSTRACT : The paper attempts to illustrate essential aspects of discourse developed during the present Refugee Crisis. Thus, it explores how online newspaper articles presented the situation of refugees in the period between June 18 and September 20, 2015. The impact of the media over the way refugees are perceived by citizens is tremendous, shaping attitudes and behaviour. In this respect, I employed an innovative approach towards media discourse, which connects the events that occurred at the beginning of the refugee crisis with a specific analysis of BBC written materials. Evaluating the migration crisis from both the perspective of the European identity crisis and of a Post-colonial mentality creates an understanding of media impact over social interaction. The research applies a variety of methods, including discourse analysis, content analysis and frame analysis to media news materials. At the beginning of the research, I focused primarily on content analysis in order to establish media attitude to the presented events, employing the vocabulary used. Moreover, the presentation of the events is backed up with illustrative excerpts of European leaders' discourse. Considering the role of leaders' discourse in shaping social interaction, I further explored BBC discourse through the lens of EU identity and Euro-centrism. In this phase of research, QSR NVIVO 10 program was used for qualitative analysis both for coding and analysing the data. The last part of the paper creates a framework for discussion as to how the media's perception of refugees contributes to the acknowledgement of the universality of human rights, positive identification and humanistic values.

KEY WORDS : refugee crisis, media discourse, EU identity, Euro-centrism, integration

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Discourse theory encompasses a variety of approaches with different insight which start from the common assumption that language and language use structure human thought and action (Karlberg, 2005). Consequently, people's actions and identities are framed in accordance to language and language use, a fact that assumes an important aspect in shaping people's views on the media. Socio-constructivist theorists, such as Alexander Wendt, focus thus on the fact that states act on the basis of perceptions and created identities (Wendt, 1992). The leaders' discourse and the manner in which a particular state reacts in a specific situation may be anticipated by exploring the past actions and perceptions or specific characteristics of the leader. Under these circumstances, it is important to explore the way European societies perceive the migration of refugees that come from Asian and African countries.

The perception of otherness constitutes a major element for constructing an intercultural dialogue and portraying differences as an asset rather than an obstacle to communication. To this point, integration of foreign individuals in a society relates to accepting diversity and finding a path to value distinct characteristics and cultures. Considering this aspect, migration is a process that ties people together in a global society.

Still, the huge flow of refugees and migrants who have come to Europe in the recent period indicates that reality is quite the opposite. The countries of the European Union have not had a unitary voice with regard to the situation, but rather have avoided accepting responsibility or acting on the basis of the principles of international law with regard to human rights. The negative attitude that some European countries display towards receiving refugees or accepting their default status as a transit country may show either a fragmented identity of the members of the European Union or a split between European countries and the rest of the world.

On the one hand, the Refugee Crisis reflects the vagueness and ambiguity of defining and constructing a European identity of EU countries. European identity may be seen as an external construct accepted by countries in order to mask their nationalistic endeavour (Auer, 2010). In this respect, being a member of the European Union matters only when it brings benefits to a particular country, including economic development and political power. The European Union "is still a hybrid legal and political system", characterized by the domination of member states (Tosiek; Ingeborg). According to Ingeborg, the lack of consensus

among countries on some topics is not an issue of concern, representing the normal path followed after a period of major achievements. However, Bauman notes that Europe is trapped between power and politics, “finding itself in a truly unenviable plight” (Bauman, 2013: 15–19). The lack of coordination between power and politics at the level of the European Union is fragmented by two incompatible roles, one to protect citizens and the other human rights, both while serving the interests of the states, paralyzed the EU with an identity crisis. According to Tzvetan Todorov, a civilization discovers itself while presenting the features of another civilization (Todorov, 1999). Seen from this perspective, the threat attributed to refugees reflects the European identity crisis, a crisis of modernity, secularization and meaning.

Still, integration remains the main point on the European Agenda together with improving representation and democracy on the supranational level. Habermas argues that the “monstrous mass crimes of the twentieth century” should be interpreted in the context that nations can no longer be regarded as “innocent” and thus, immune to international law. “Petty nationalist pasts” should be overcome, leaving space for creating a better, and more “rational” organization, which has to be based on “worldwide consensus” (See: Habermas, 2009: 114–125). The concept of “worldwide consensus” that Habermas refers to includes mutual recognition between different religions and acceptance of large Muslim communities in Europe. In a society where religious organizations coexist with secular societies and gain more and more relevance in people’s lives, fostering a dialogue between civilizations implies putting an emphasis on religious values. The recognition of the common grounds of the different religions and the acceptance of religious communities brings integration a step closer. Under these circumstances, refugees and immigrants represent an important voice in constructing the identity of Post-Secular Europe (Habermas, 2008).

On the other hand, the Refugee Crisis mirrors Euro-centrism and Post-colonial attitudes. According to psychoanalysts, conflict attitudes are caused by the fear of otherness. Hence, an individual perceives others as threatening and negative and then mirrors the threat in the instinctual and irrational projections of his repressed weaknesses and instincts. Jung defines this concept as “Darkness” and holds that “Darkness” is present in each person and has stronger effects when it is not included in the conscious life of an individual (See: Jung, 1983).

However, the “shadow” refers to the “collective unconscious” as represented by Arabs and Africans, affirming a “binary opposition” between Europeans and the rest of the world, and a superiority of Europeans: “The Arab’s dusky complexion marks him as a “shadow”, but not a personal shadow, rather an ethnic one. . . . The predominantly rationalistic European finds much that is human alien to him, and he prides himself on this without realizing that this rationality is won at the expense of his vitality, and that the primitive part of his personality is consequently condemned to a more or less underground existence” (Jung, 1961/1965: 244–245).

The impact of colonial attitudes on the reflection of otherness is emphasized by Frantz Fanon. European civilization sees the civilizations from other parts of the world (Africa) as an expression of negative instincts, the uncivilized savage: “the black man who sleeps in each man of colour” (Fanon, 1961, 1967, 1986). Kovel (1995) also notices the Eurocentric attitude, unfolding the tendency of psychical ghettoisation of certain types of people (See: Elliot & Frosch 1995), while Altman (2003) points out that the black man represents the “objectified” human being in “white people’s” system of oppression.

Drawing on the Post-colonial theory of Euro-centrism, can we address the issue of identifying refugees as a threat to European stability?

Considering the international context and legislation from recent years, a tendency to form a negative image in relation to certain groups can be observed. From the 20th century onwards, migration control systems settled on the movement between countries, slowly evolving to an issue of international concern. Nation states had full responsibility for the rules governing their own nationality and were only required to accept their own citizens. With regard to citizens of other countries, states can decide which individuals they offer protection to and which they allow to enter their territory on the basis of the provisions of the “1951 Refugee Convention”. In the absence of other regulations, states improved their immigration controls and made it even more difficult for asylum seekers and other foreigners to travel. In this way, immigration controls constituted mechanisms developed to stop “illegal migration”. One of the most relevant cases related to increasing border controls to stop illegal migration deals with the illegal movement of people between the United States and Mexico. The militarization of the border between the United States and Mexico and other provisions that burdened migration had in fact a contrary effect to the

intended one, as the number of illegal immigrants in the United States grew from 3–4 million to 11 million in 2009.¹

The data dynamics show that the harsher immigration controls become, the larger the illegal population will become. In addition, the term “illegal” creates a negative image of immigrants and constitutes an affront to human dignity. Even if immigration controls are seen as a mechanism of states to protect sovereignty and economic interests, immigration controls constitute barriers to international cooperation and intercultural dialogue, while leaving people vulnerable to human trafficking and exploitation (See: Dauvergne, 2012: 75–92).

The perception of refugees as a security threat was influenced by international discourse and international law directives. The identification of terrorism as the main security threat that comes from somewhere “out there” and affects the state from inside had a tremendous impact on the perception of migrants, leading to the “criminalization” of migration (See: Atak & Crépeau, 2012: 94–101). After the terrorist attacks from September 2001, such states as Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States put even more pressure on creating a negative image of migrants, as enacting new legislation for facilitating deportation and the detention of foreign nationals may show.

Furthermore, the United Nations and the European Union legitimized the anti-migration discourse through initiatives that expressly linked terrorism to refugees. For example, in Resolution 1373 (2001), the UN Security Council called on nation states to ensure that the asylum-seekers were not involved in terrorist groups and to use appropriate measures to determine the fact. Similarly, EU Council highlighted the need for creating “an integrated borders management agency” for developing an effective combat against terrorism (*ibidem*: 103–110). These resolutions further legitimized the idea that “the institution of asylum is a terrorist’s refuge” and led to the establishment of sanctions against individuals and specific groups” (*ibidem*).

Consequently, Muslim people were identified by public opinion as terrorists, a fact that destabilized intercultural communication. Studies such as: “I’m a Muslim, but I’m not a Terrorist?: Victimization, Risky Identities and

¹ The data was reported by the Pew Centre over successive years. See: Pew Hispanic Center, “Unauthorized Immigrants in the US”, <http://pewhispanic.org/unauthorized-immigration/> Access date: October 7, 2015.

the Performance of safety” (Mythen & Walklate & Khan, 2009), “Islamophobia: Incitement to Religious Hatred-Legislating for a New Fear” (Werbner, 2005), “What do we Think about Muslims? The Validity of Westerners’ Implicit Theories About the Associations Between Muslims’ Religiosity, Religious Identity, Aggression Potential, and Attitudes Toward Terrorism” (Fischer & Greitemeyer & Kastenmüller, 2007) show how the hatred and fear of Muslim people escalated due to their alleged correlation with terrorism. While the first two articles focus on the effects of the exclusion of Muslim people after the events of 2001 as well as their need to be protected against “Islamophobia”, Fischer’s research shows that the attitudes of Muslims and Christians differ only on religious identification, as people of the Muslim religion are reported to have a stronger religious identification than Christians. The author unfolds that “increased religious identification of Muslims did not lead to more justification of Muslim aggression, but to lower justification of Christian aggression” (ibidem: 380). The research concludes that aggression potential is not higher for Muslim people and they are not more supportive of terrorism than Christians.

The media also contributed to the creation of a discourse against foreigners, molding different groups into archetypes of fear and terrorism. For example, the article “The Muslim-American Neighbour as Terrorist: The Representation of a Muslim Family in 24” (Halse, 2012) explores the way Muslim and Arab characters are portrayed in films, illustrating that the media promote stereotypical images of Arabs as terrorists (The “plot summary of the Araz family”, 24 hours, ibidem: 120–129).

The anti-migration discourse represents a measure of states to protect their national sovereignty, enforce discipline and the rule of law. States have the legitimate right to punish citizens when security is threatened and the rule of law is established in accordance to state interest. States decide who they receive, having only refolement. Still, Foucault signals that “the state must not exercise an unconditional right of life and death, over its own people or those of another country. To deny the state this right of life and death meant opposing the bombings of Vietnam by the United States and currently means helping refugees.”² Foucault interprets this moral obligation of states in the context of offering

² “Michel Foucault on refugees- a previously untranslated interview from 1979”, September 29, 2015, <http://progressivegeographies.com/2015/09/29/michel-foucault-on-refugees-a-previously-untranslated-interview-from-1979/>, Access date: October 7, 2015.

help to refugees. But the integration of foreigners brings major challenges to a state, especially in what concerns the protection of national citizens. Describing the measures taken by the authorities to protect the citizens of a region from a plague, Foucault explores the duty of the state to protect national citizens from disruptive individuals. During the Great Plague Epidemic, people were monitored and registered, isolated one from another, received food through channels that intentionally obscured the suppliers. Furthermore, no one was allowed to move from their place without being completely responsible for the risks he assumed and had to respect the hierarchical division of power enforced. Any attempt at disrespecting order was severely punished by both the authorities and society, with authorities being “omnipresent” in every aspect of people’s lives (Foucault, 1975). The “isolation” of each individual from the rest of society, like the “architectural” model of Bentham’s “Panopticon”, offers control and surveillance, while it “depersonalizes power and restrains communication and interaction” (ibidem: 195–227). Each individual is kept in a “small cell with large windows that make him visible to a supervisor, but do not allow him to see the supervisor”. This way, his acts are controlled all the time, “the Panopticon inducing in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (ibidem: 201).

As the author mentions, the Panopticon is “polyvalent in its applications, serving to reform prisoners, treat patients, instruct schoolchildren, confine the insane, supervise workers, put beggars and idlers to work” (ibidem: 205). Bentham also underlines the largest applicability of the Panopticon principle, sustaining its general use “to all establishments whatsoever, in which, within a space not too large to be covered or commanded by buildings, a number of persons are meant to be kept under inspection” (Apud Bentham, ibidem: 206). Seen from this perspective, the construction of refugee camps resembles Bentham’s Panopticon, with refugees being constantly monitored and punished because they belong to a different civilization. The focus on protection actually hides surveillance, while “power represents a network that includes both the advantaged and disadvantaged” (Hardy, 2003: 464). Refugees appear as individuals who need to be monitored, through which they are subjected to exclusion.

Deconstructing the concept of refugees, Soguk (1999) and Arsdale (2001) point out that this group of people is seen as: “disruptive”, “victims”, “transitional”,

“requiring solutions and problematic”. Most of them live in camps with their families for years in countries neighbouring conflict areas, facing food scarcity and extreme poverty. They are not allowed to move from the small space they are relegated to and wherever they go, even within the confines of a given camp, they go at their own risk. Consequently, they look for whatever chance possible to improve their lives by getting out of these camps and in the process they easily become victims of smugglers. Migrant workers who lived in countries later affected by conflict also look for refuge in Europe, considering that the only way to pass the harsh migration controls is to apply for asylum. Apart from refugees, other categories of migrants are deported on the border, a fact that motivates many foreigners to declare that they are refugees solely to be allowed to enter a European country. No regulations stipulate that only refugees are allowed to leave their countries, as each individual is allowed to do so. Nevertheless, it is a state decision to accept foreigners, a fact that places migrants in an absurd situation: people have the right to leave their countries, but they do not have the right to settle in another country.

Methodological assumptions of the realized research

The paper explores media discourse that emerged during the recent refugee crisis. The paper hypothesizes that the media contributed to the emergence and development of nationalistic views by suggesting that refugees are a threat to Europe. Moreover, the media presented few articles displaying positive examples of intercultural dialogue and did not report examples of a positive correlation between European citizens and refugees. In fact, they put little effort into “debriefing refugees’ rights” with respect to international law and explained the main aspects related to the situation of refugees through the lens of public opinion. Still, the media also described people’s initiatives to help refugees, suggesting solidarity and empathy. Addressing the question as to whether BBC discourse portrays the situation of refugees as connected to the European Union or to Euro-centrism, aims towards discussing the main hypothesizes that the media presented refugees as a threat to European societies.

During this research, I employed content analysis, discourse analysis and frame analysis to dissect media discourse. While content analysis allows us

an in-depth view of the information presented in a specific source, discourse analysis explores the text as part of social interaction where views, identities and attitudes are constructed. In this sense, the ground hypothesis reflects the socio-constructivist theory, which sees the world as a social construct (Wendt, 1992). Frame analysis starts from selecting aspects of a perceived reality, which, in this case, are the concepts of the EU and Euro-centrism, and interprets them in such a way as “to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman, 1993: 52).

Starting from the hypothesis that the media shapes the attitudes and perspectives of a society, I questioned whether the refractory attitude to refugee integration may be understood in the context of the Euro-centric attitude or as an identity crisis of the European Union. Moreover, I wanted to see how well the anti-migration discourse is presented in the media and if the main sources of information, such as the BBC, hint to agree with the integration or the anti-migration discourse.

The analysed newspaper represents a noteworthy source of information for European citizens, known for its professionalism and objectivity. The BBC is the world’s leading public service broadcaster, providing news and information in 27 languages.³ Its main values connect to impartiality and honesty, the BBC being engaged to inform, educate and entertain people.⁴

During the first phase of research, I explored how the Refugee Crisis is generally illustrated by the media and I noted the main facts that played a significant role in the emergence of the crisis situation (before 20 September, 2015). To achieve this goal, I selected the main events described in broadcast media, including the BBC, Reuters and Mediafax as the primary sources. In addition, other publications, such as *The Economist* and *The Guardian*, presented analyses and reports focused on the events and the leaders’ reactions to them as expressed in their speeches. Highlighting the causes that pressured refugees to look for asylum in Europe and the hardships they face on their way to the destination country matters when analysing the events that followed the media discourse. A brief presentation of the crisis and of the main approaches to the crisis

³ BBC, “Inside the BBC. At a Glance”, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/whowear/ata glance> Access date: October 7, 2015.

⁴ BBC, “Inside the BBC. Mission and Values”, http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/whowear/mission_and_values, Access date: October 7, 2015.

completes the analysis with comprehensible data meant to support the findings. However, I tried to alter the information as little as possible, preserving the vocabulary used in the articles. This was essential in order to show that media discourse depicted refugees as a threat to Europe by focusing on the dimension of the migration phenomenon, and migrants' vulnerability.

The second phase of the research implied a specific analysis of media discourse after the emergence of the crisis, centred on the news from 20 September, 2015–22 October, 2015. The method in this phase was used in order to select the relevant data for my research. Hence, I chronologically ordered the articles and subsequently created a database with them which is included in said research. Noticing that I found no articles on the refugee query for certain days (04.10.2015, 10.10.2015, 27.09.2015), I added other relevant articles for the topic from the days when higher numbers of articles were published: 22.09.2015, 05.10.2015, 18.10.2015, 19.10.2015. In the end, the research database consisted of 33 articles and the information was grouped in accordance to the concepts of Euro-centrism and European identity.

According to Wallerstein (1997), Euro-centrism represents a base of the “geo-culture of the modern world”. It reflects a value of the European culture as compared to other civilizations and it emphasizes the main European achievements. Nevertheless, Frantz Fanon criticizes Euro-centrism for its superiority (Fanon, 1961). In addition, the author recommends to foreigners who settle in European countries to promote their own culture as a symbol of national consciousness, instead of assimilating to European values. The distinction between US versus THEM clearly illustrates Euro-centrism. Considering that Euro-centrism is so embedded in people's perspectives that it usually goes unnoticed (Shohat, Stam, 2014), I decided to refer to Euro-centrism from the perspective of national sovereignty. Moreover, another dimension of Euro-centrism presented in the paper relates to the perception of European civilization as superior to others, a fact suggested by the leaders' appeal to respect European values. To illustrate Euro-centrism, I established the following codes: “appeals to humanistic values of Europe”, “governmental measures to receive refugees”, “anti-migration discourse”, “criminalization of refugees” (sub-codes: “illegal people”, “linking refugees to terrorism”), “governmental measures and planning to limit or avoid migration”, “supporting the anti-migration discourse”, “criticism of national politics”, and “returning to war zone”. The code “appeals to humanistic values of

Europe” constitutes the main hint to Euro-centrism, as it reveals a degree of superiority of the European culture over other cultures. Although it is not necessarily a negative dimension, the “appeals to humanistic values of Europe” code portrays refugees and migrants as victims and vulnerable. “The anti-migration discourse” encompasses discussions about limiting the number of refugees, establishing border controls and topics that suggest that refugees are a threat by using words such as “influx”, “continuous flow”, “crisis”, “warn”, etc. The code entitled “criminalization of refugees” deals with all the explicit references that link refugees to rapes, attacks, violence and terrorism. The code “governmental measures and planning to limit or avoid migration” includes the measures taken by states as a consequence of their anti-migration policies and as a way to secure the welfare of their citizens. The code of “supporting the anti-migration discourse” makes a clear reference to leaders, politicians, personalities or other people who consider refugees to be disruptive. Starting from the point that nationalistic views can be included in the concept of Euro-centrism, the “criticism of national politics” code explores the discourse of the opposition from different countries with regard to the measures taken by governments. The last code for Euro-centrism, “returning to war zone”, contains articles related to asylum-seekers’ return to Syria.

The European identity focuses on aspects that make the citizens of each member state consider themselves to be citizens of the European Union. Cultural aspects, mutual acceptance of religions and a focus on respect for diversity and multiculturalism represent the main values of the European Union. In this respect, pro-integration discourse on the topic of refugees mirrors values supported by the European Union. I coded the data related to the European Union, establishing “Examples of good practice and integration” (sub-codes: “Positive measures taken by governments to receive refugees”, “Mutual acceptance of religions”, “Publicly supporting refugees”) as the main elements of the European discourse. The sub-code “publicly supporting refugees” relates to data that suggest solutions to avoid the unfair treatment of refugees and migrants from the perspective of human rights (“Finding paths to avoid anti-migration discourse”), describes how particular people decided to help refugees (“People helping refugees”) and finally describes discourse supporting refugees and migrants’ integration (“Publicly supporting refugees and migrants’ integration”). As regards the discourse on integration, this depicts refugees’ or migrants’ stories and achievements (“Refugees’ and migrants’ stories”) and emphasizes the rights refugees are entitled to (“Refugees’ rights”).

I uploaded the sources database in QSR Nvivo 10 program and then I established a node hierarchy that reflects the coding structure described above. QSR Nvivo 10 represents a software programme that structures, manages and organizes unstructured data. It is a tool used for qualitative research, a fact that makes it suitable for the present analysis. Then, I analysed the data resulting from the research queries and interpreted the results.

Analysis

During the first phase of research, I employed a general analysis of how the media presents the migration flow in order to illustrate the main events that occurred at the beginning of the crisis, and a specific analysis which questions whether Migration Crisis signals European identity crisis or suggests a Euro-Centric perspective of the European countries. The use of the specific vocabulary highlights the type of discourse employed and the attitude regarding the situation.

For example, the “tensed” situation in many countries of the world has caused a *wave* of refugees unprecedented in the last decade. The problems in Ivory Coast, Libya, Yemen, Syria and the Horn of Africa in the last 12 months have forced over 800,000 people to flee across borders and seek refuge in neighbouring countries. At the end of last year, over 42 million people held refugee status, were displaced or were classed as asylum seekers.

“Most of the refugees, more than 2.7 million, are from Afghanistan. The second largest group are refugees from Iraq, now more than 1.7 million, followed by refugees from Somalia, Sudan and Congo. The majority of refugees have chosen to remain in the neighbouring countries primarily because these countries leave their borders open in most cases. The majority of refugees are in Pakistan, which hosts 1.7 million, followed by Iran, Kenya and South Africa.”⁵

Furthermore, almost half of the world’s displaced people are children and many spend their entire childhood far from home. According to UNHCR, children below the age of 18 constituted 46% of the refugee population in 2012.⁶

⁵ CNN, Parish, E., “UNHCR: Refugee numbers reach highest ever recorded”, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/06/18/world/unhcr-refugees-most-in-history/>, Access date: October 8, 2015.

⁶ UNHCR, “Worldwide displacement hits all-time high as war and persecution increase”, <http://www.unhcr.org/558193896.html>, Access date: October 8, 2015.

“Thousands of children” are parts of the “refugee caravan” moving from the warpath or migrating because of social problems. Nobody asks them if they want to, nobody tries to offer them protection. Their parents left home and consequently, they started a journey seeking a better life. While following this path, many “parents die and children wake up facing a reality without any adults to protect them”. This way, they easily become “victims” of human traffickers and have no chance for protection and education.

In Europe, Germany is the country which has received most of the refugees: over 570,000. The most painful aspect considering the financial and economic crisis worldwide is that the already critical situation of these refugees “is likely only to get worse”. Germany says it expects a record 800,000 asylum-seekers to arrive this year.⁷

In the context of the present situation, Europe is watching “powerless” as its boundaries are “assaulted” daily by “thousands of desperate refugees”. While officials seek a solution, countries that have already received “waves of immigrants” are prepared to make “radical” decisions.

So far, almost 300,000 immigrants have come to Europe, Asia and the Middle East, and the “exodus of biblical proportions” continues in the rhythm of a few thousand daily. Nearly a quarter of a million migrants have crossed the Mediterranean to Europe this year, according to the International Organization for Migration.⁸

Where do they come from, how are they coming, how many “die on the road”, where do they go and, most importantly, why?

There are regions where “the poorest, the most insecure and war-torn countries” of the globe are gathered together: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Eritrea. Individuals from these countries are desperate. For a few thousand dollars they cross land borders to Turkey and the Mediterranean Sea in unstable boats. Thousands are dying, drowned together, children and adults alike. The International Organization for Migration estimated that 2,373

⁷ The Economist, “Germany, the EU country which takes the most asylum seekers is straining”, <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21661941-wanting-burden-shared-germany-eu-country-which-takes-most-asylum-seekers-straining>, Access date: October 10, 2015.

⁸ BBC, “Europe migrant crisis : Surge in numbers at EU borders”, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33972632>, Access date: October 7, 2015.

people have died (in 2015) while trying to reach Europe by sea, and 3,573 in the past 12 months.⁹

Greece, Macedonia, Serbia and Hungary have been the only countries that failed to react in a cohesive or intelligible manner and eventually adopted an anti-migration discourse: “let the tide go” further west of the continent or stop it, temporarily. Apart from Greece, Italy is one of the countries which have been the most “exposed” to the “massive influx of immigrants”. Over 104,000 immigrants from Africa, Middle East and South Asia arrived in the ports of southern Italy.¹⁰

For the refugees and migrants, crossing into Europe often means crossing the sea in search of a new life. In the first months of 2015, having been rescued in the Mediterranean, 4000 migrants managed to enter Italy. Macedonia has struggled to cope with the influx of transnational migrants and refugees from Greece, at one stage shutting borders and declaring a “state of emergency”.

Since April, European officials have been trying to find a common response to the “wave of immigrants”. So far, the discussions have ended with requests for solidarity and recommendations for Greece and Italy, countries which are gateways for immigrants. But concrete measures have not been taken. The distribution of refugees among all EU member states in accordance to an established quota system represented a suggested measure that caused tensions inside the EU.¹¹

According to Nicu Sava, a Romanian sociologist and international relations expert, “Europe seems to sleep and does not realize that it faces the biggest crisis of refugees since the Second World War.” He identifies the political arena as the main cause, viewing the crisis as “a product of Europe’s lack of foresight and lack of policies that mitigate such crises”.¹²

⁹ Strohecker, K., Truck of corpses, new shipwreck intensify Europe’s migrant crisis, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-grants-eu-austria-idUSKCN0QW19H20150827>, Access date: October 6, 2015.

¹⁰ BBC, “Europe migrant crisis: Surge in numbers at EU borders”.

¹¹ The European Union, “European schemes for relocation and resettlement”, http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/docs/communication_on_the_european_agenda_on_migration_annex_en.pdf, Access date: October 8, 2015.

¹² PRO TV, “Migrant Crisis”, <http://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/international/analiza-stirileprotv-europa-in-fata-unui-exod-fara-precedent-cum-poate-deveni-romania-poarta-spre-ue-pentru-imigranti.html>, Access date: October 4, 2015.

The leaders of European countries took a stand regarding the “refugee exodus”, trying to find solutions to the crisis situation. Thus, German chancellor Angela Merkel declared that drafting new legislative provisions might represent a solution.¹³

Bonino, Italy’s former foreign minister emphasized the need to foster cooperation on the European level in order to find common solutions to the crisis. Hence, she calls on addressing the issue on a supranational level and considers this crisis as a way to improve the European dialogue:

“There is no one, single, miraculous solution: intervention must be concerted and coordinated on all fronts. The new policy is a sound, bold proposal that must be supported, for it would require all member states to fully take responsibility for the management of the emergency. The most pressing issue is to calm the collectivised hysteria that has taken hold of Europe, for it serves the politics of some, but doesn’t reflect reality. Millions of individuals are fleeing wars, dictatorships, torture, and the threat of death – and not only in the Mediterranean: it’s a structural, global problem. The answer can only be political, and it must set the safeguarding of human life as its central priority.”¹⁴

Mark Kekesi, the Hungarian Prime Minister, sends a “warning” signal on the dimension of the phenomenon and its danger: “the wave has definitely reached us now”. To support his view, Mark Kekesi, who is also the head of the MigSzol Szeged, an NGO that focuses on migration issues, affirms that the number of migrants surpasses any expectation: “There have never been so many of them, and we expect this to continue for a while”.¹⁵

The “refugee crisis” seems to “endanger” Schengen Area, according to Gentiloni, the Italian foreign Minister. He pointed out that an issue of main concern is the free movement of people:

¹³ Barkin, N., “Refugee crisis suddenly Merkel’s biggest challenge”, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/08/31/us-europe-migrants-germany-analysis-idUSKCN0R00FZ20150831>, Access date: October 4, 2015.

¹⁴ Open Democracy, “Can Europe make it?”, Interview with Emma Bonino and Paolo Mancini, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/emma-bonino-donato-paolo-mancini/emma-bonino-interview>, Access date: October 4, 2015.

¹⁵ Dunai, M., “The wave has reached us: EU gropes for answers to migrant surge”, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/08/25/us-europe-migrants-idUSKCN0QU1BC20150825>, Access date: October 3, 2015.

“What is at risk is one of the pillars of the EU: the free movement of persons. From the Italian coast until Kos (Greece), from Macedonia to Hungary and Calais (France), tensions rise and, over time, might put Schengen into question.”¹⁶

He continues the idea by emphasizing that the newcomers represent an issue of European concern and all EU member states should cooperate to solve the situation:

“Immigrants are not arriving in Greece, in Italy or in Hungary. They arrive in Europe! That is why the rules for receiving must be ‘Europeanized’.”¹⁷

As can be noticed, a general overview of media discourse shows that the approach to migration from the analysed period mirrors Euro-centric attitudes. Thus, refugees as migrants are seen as a problem from outside which European countries have to deal with. As concerning an empathetic view over the migrants’ and asylum seekers’ situation, this has little visibility in media discourse and the human rights topic is generally poorly addressed. Instead, in an attempt to create “emotional news”, the media illustrate refugees and migrants as victims, indirectly placing them in an inferior position in comparison to Europeans. Furthermore, the anti-migration control measures taken by Hungary reveal even stronger Euro-centrism. Still, media discourse also highlights that the crisis situation emerged because of identity fragmentation at EU level. Thus, border countries feel that other European Union countries do not express their solidarity in helping them deal with such a large number of people that unexpectedly reached their territory.

In order to define whether media discourse portrays the escalation of the migration phenomenon and the tensions created from a Euro-centric perspective or as a result of European Union’s fragmented identity, I narrowed the sources and explored the information provided in greater depth. In this sense,

¹⁶ Loewenstein, A., “A punitive approach to refugees will lead Europe to unrest and corruption”, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/may/04/a-punitive-approach-to-refugees-will-lead-europe-to-unrest-and-corruption>, Access date: October 3, 2015.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

I selected BBC news archive as a relevant source of information and continued with exploring BBC discourse from 20 September, 2015–22 October, 2015. After sorting the articles in a chronological order, I chose a single article for each day. As I did not find articles for each day of the period, I added some articles for the relevance of the topic. In the end, the research database consisted of 33 articles. The chosen period represented a critical one for the migration to and inside Europe, considering also how weather conditions affected migrants and asylum seekers. The colder weather worsened the living conditions that refugees and asylum seekers had to face during their flight, increasing the risk of disease and epidemics.¹⁸

The second phase of the research consisted of analysing whether the way the European states manage the migration crisis can be connected to Euro-centrism or to the fragmentation of European identity in media discourse. The frequency of some specific terms used in the articles represents the first clue related to the prevalence of a specific discourse. Consequently, I made use of the Frequency Query in order to show which words were most frequently used in BBC discourse (See: Annex 1). According to the analysis, the most frequent words that had high relevance for the research were: migrants (416 times, 2.06%), refugees (274, 1.36%), crisis (182, 0.9%), Europe (158, 0.78%) and Syrian (116, 0.58%). The list of the most frequently used words in the written news articles from the selected sources supports the hypothesis that the refugee crisis mirrors Euro-centrism. Thus, the word “migrant” was more frequent than “refugee” and the term “crisis” was extensively used to refer to the situation. As regards the term “help”, it was employed only in 0.56% of the discourse (114). While “migrant”, “crisis”, “Syrian” and “Europe” represent terms specific to the perspective of Euro-centrism, “help” and “refugee” may be easily connected to an integration discourse and indirectly linked to the European identity. Values such as diversity, unity and acceptance represent core values of the European Union.

Classifying the sources in relation to a particular category posed difficulties. As a broadcast media source, the BBC complies with the norms of objectivity and neutrality and does not necessarily make reference to Euro-centrism or EU identity. However, hidden elements of Euro-centrism and European identity

¹⁸ BBC, “Migrant crisis: Colder weather hits refugees on the move”, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34370447>, Access date: October 3, 2015.

are intertwined in the message, suggesting a certain reaction to events which took place or leaders' discourse at the level of the community. The choice of news receiving more coverage as well as the way it was detailed suggests the approach of media discourse. The prevalence of elements suggesting a particular approach also plays an essential role in this analysis. The charts below show the articles receiving most references for the main nodes, namely EU and Euro-centrism. For the EU node, the article "Migrant crisis- Hollande and Merkel urge EU unity" was the most frequently cited (covering 20.47%), while for the Euro-centrism node "Migrants 'torch tents' in Slovenia camp" represented the article with most references: 13.51%.

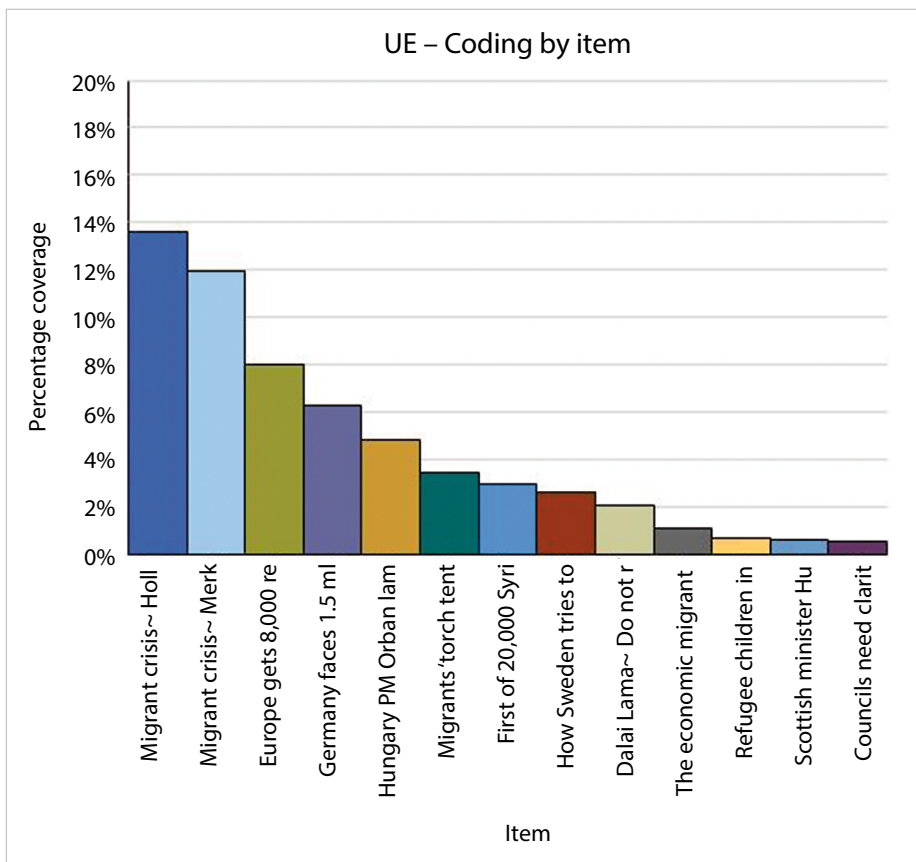


Figure 1: Nodes compared by number of coding references (Author's compilation)

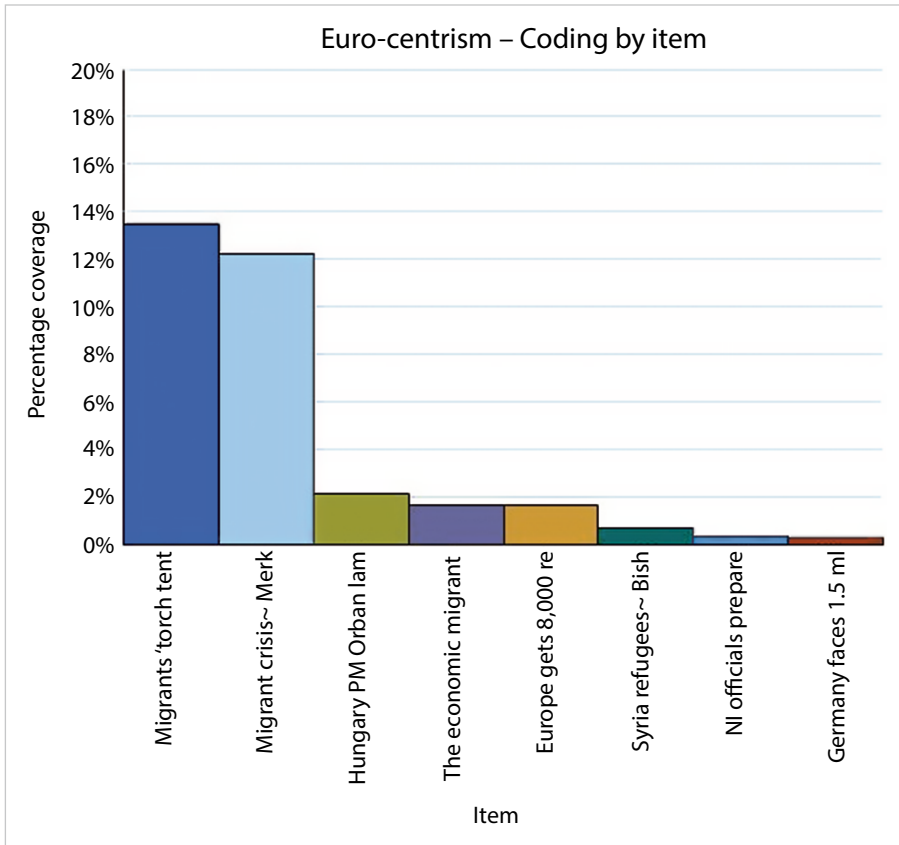


Figure 2: Nodes compared by number of items coded (Author’s compilation)

The Tree Maps of Framework Matrices, which I designed through NVivo 10 Program, show the most prevalent elements of media discourse. While the first chart compares nodes by number of coding references (Figure 1), the second one compares nodes by number of items coded (Figure 2). The hierarchical node structure codes sentences from sources in accordance to hints about specific topics, which are directly or indirectly linked to the analysed approach. Thus, the main nodes, mainly Euro-centrism and EU, contain explicit information about the approaches. The other nodes encompassed in the structure make reference to aspects of Euro-centrism or EU discourse that are necessarily coded in the main node itself.

This way, we may notice that the prevalence of explicit information to an approach does not necessarily show that the mentioned approach is more visible in the media. Rather, certain prevalence shows that the aforementioned approach is presented more directly.

At first sight, the chart on page 18 shows that the discourse focuses on EU identity rather than Euro-centrism. Hence, the EU has 92 direct coding references as compared to 44 of Euro-centrism. Concerning all the coding references from the EU main node as compared to the Euro-centrism main node, EU has 774 coding references (the sum of all nodes coding references) as compared to 482 connected to Euro-centrism. The data obtained prove that the present migration of refugees and asylum seekers to Europe reflects the identity crisis on the EU level. The tree map analyses of coding references signal that anti-migration discourse got the highest number of direct references from all the nodes (127). Although the number may show that the coding criteria are too loose and general, there is a high chance that this number indicates that even the discourse on broadcast television presents refugees as a threat. It does not, however, contain explicit data that have a negative influence on public opinion, such as criminalization of refugees (20), illegal people (8) or linking refugees to terrorism (5). In this respect, concentrating on the high number of refugees and on the panic created by such a high number of people arriving in Europe does not create a positive identification in relation to refugees.

Still, the BBC compensates for this tendency by addressing an indirect integration discourse, concentrated on examples of people who helped (44) and supported refugees (45). Although the examples of people helping refugees may indirectly put refugees in an inferior position to Europeans, this kind of discourse significantly addresses integration. The node “Tensions inside the EU” explicitly addresses the issue of European fragmentation, presenting conflicts inside the EU generated or amplified by the arrival of refugees. Blaming refugees for these situations contributes towards the creation of a negative image of refugees.

The number of items coded at each node brings more relevance in noticing the prevalence of a particular approach in the media. Hence, it quantitatively shows which topics had the greatest coverage in news articles from the BBC. The data show that most of the items coded referred to refugees’ or migrants’ stories by illustrating the rights refugees should benefit from through integration

schemes and the infringement of their rights after coming to Europe. However, none of the articles mention refugees' rights as they are outlined by the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol, nor do they appeal to universal human rights, thus portraying refugees as victims and problematic. The problem of integration is addressed in none of these articles, particularly from the point of view of governmental measures to receive them and those of charity organizations to address the desperate situation of people outside Europe.

Addressing the similarity between the information coded for each approach is essential in understanding the relation between EU identity and Euro-centrism. In this sense we address a cluster analysis of the coding similarity between the established nodes. The Pearson Correlation coefficient shows the dependency relation between variables, values ranging between -1 (least similar) to 1 (most similar). Considering the hierarchical structure of the established nodes, a cluster analysis should show powerful correlations between nodes from the same category (main node) and a negative relation between nodes from different categories. Still, the cluster analysis summary notes a very powerful correlation (0.869) between the node "Tensions inside EU", which belongs to "EU" main node and the node "Governmental measures and planning" classified in "Euro-centrism" main node. Other powerful correlations between nodes from different categories include: "Tensions inside EU" and "Anti-migration discourse" (0.65); "Tensions inside EU" and "Supporting the anti-migration discourse" (0.6); "EU leaders discussing the problems of refugees" and "Anti-migration discourse" (0.6). The least similar information is surprisingly coded in the same main node ("EU"), between "Refugees' rights" and "People helping refugees" (-0.42). This shows a negative correlation between the terms, one addressing the condition of refugees and the access they should have to universal rights, with references to cases when their rights have been violated and the other to positive examples of people who offer help to refugees. A lack of correlation between nodes also appears between "Governmental measures to receive refugees" and "EU leaders discussing the problem of refugees" (both belonging to the same node: "EU") and between "Illegal people" ("Euro-centrism") and "EU leaders discussing the problem of refugees" ("EU").

Noticing the common references for the two approaches and the distinct information related to them matters in analysing how the concept of European identity is linked to Euro-centrism. By using the Query Node-matrix, I designed a chart

that illustrates the information which is coded for both approaches (Figure 3) and one that presents the percentage of information presented solely through the “EU” node (Figure 4). Comparing the obtained charts (see below) I observed that although the information for anti-migration discourse corresponds to a large degree with information coded for the nodes “EU” and “Tensions inside EU”, most of the information coded at EU nodes is not coded at “Euro-centrism”.

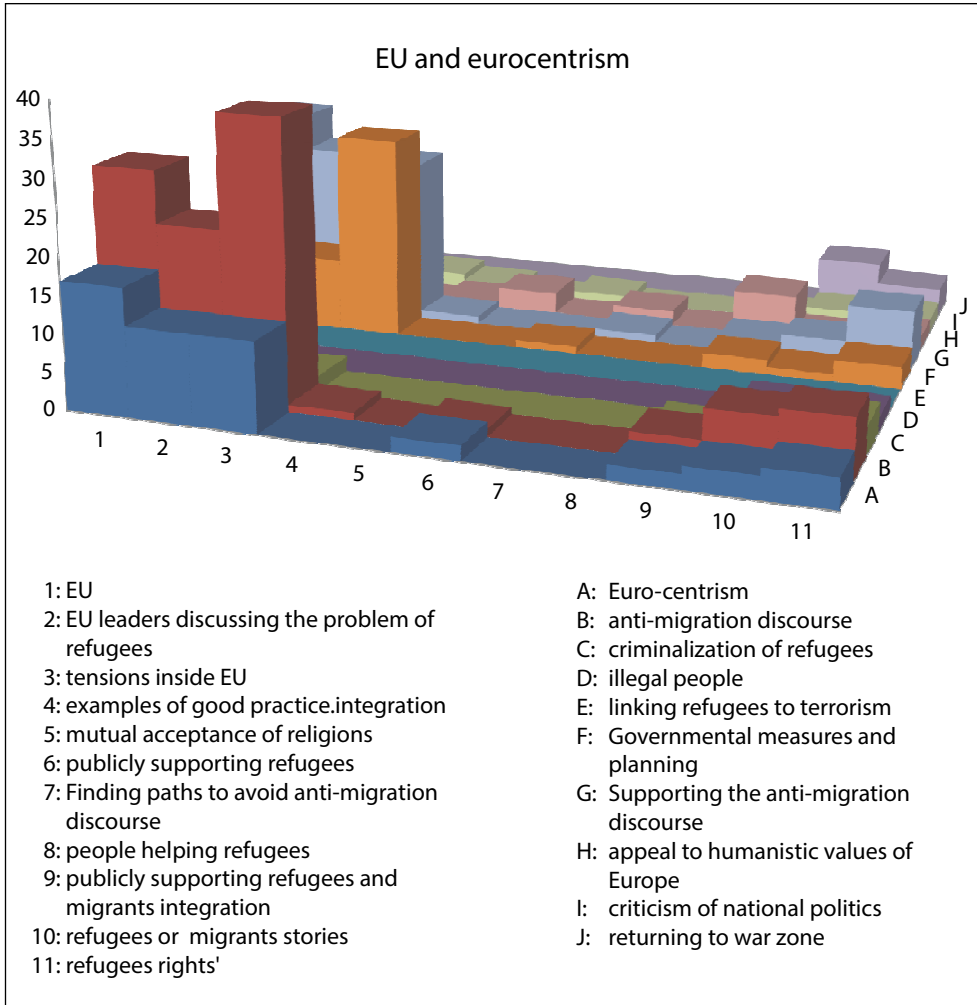


Figure 3: EU and Euro-centrism (Author’s compilation)

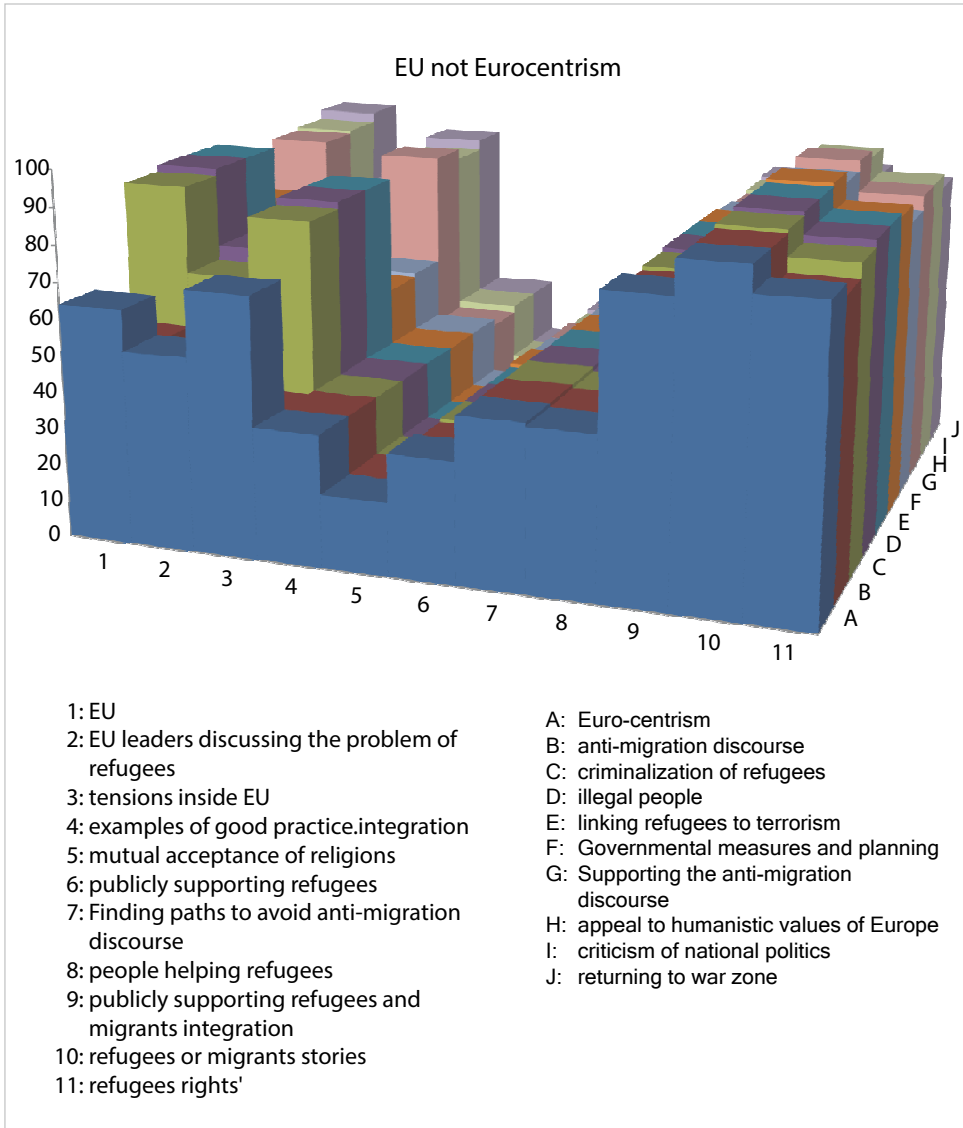


Figure 4: EU not Euro-centrism (Author’s compilation)

In addition, the two charts show that the selected sources present mixed information, focusing on both views related to the topic. The sources coded at the nodes: “Refugees’ or migrants’ stories”, “Publicly supporting refugees” and “Refugees’ Rights” are better represented in the second chart. A possible

explanation is related both to the fact that they contain a small number of references to Euro-centrism and to their coverage in the articles. Hence, some nodes, such as: “Mutual Acceptance of Religion”, “Examples of good practice: Integration”, “Publicly supporting refugees” or “Migrants integration”, do not include references to Euro-centrism. However, these nodes are poorly covered by the media.

Discussion and recommendations

The analysed media discourse reflects patterns of integration in relation to refugees’ migration to Europe. In this respect, most of the integration discourse focuses on people’s examples of offering help to refugees, a fact that may hide Eurocentric attitudes. However, international law clearly addresses the need to protect refugees through the Convention from 1951 and the Protocol from 1967. According to the provision of the aforementioned documents, refugees should be granted international protection:

“All persons outside their country of origin for reasons of feared persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order and who, as a result, require international protection”.¹⁹

While analysing media discourse, we found no reference to specific documents that basically entail the universality of the protection for refugees. However, the term *protection* is very vague, a fact that leads states to perceive protection in the context of offering the refugees a place to stay and sometimes even access to some public services.²⁰ The article focuses on the perspective of offering a favour to people who are refugees, instead of clearly specifying that it is their right to benefit from protection.

Another problematic issue refers to the perception of economic migrants. The criteria of defining refugee status do not make reference to malnutrition or epidemics, a fact that places people from extremely poor areas in an extremely

¹⁹ UNHCR, “Note on the mandate of the High Commissioner for refugees and his Office”, <http://www.unhcr.org/526a22cb6.html>, Access date: October 18, 2015.

²⁰ BBC, “NI officials prepare for Syrian refugees”, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-northern-ireland-34573302>, Access date: October 19, 2015.

vulnerable position. Poor coverage of this topic in the media may again smack of Euro-centrism.

Considering these points, even if the research shows that the attitude to refugees and migrants in Europe is more connected to EU identity than to Euro-centrism, we need to expand this analysis in order to reach a particular conclusion. A fact worth mentioning is that the selected articles had a rich anti-migration discourse. Taking into account that the BBC itself is a broadcast television station committed to values of objectivity and neutrality, it may follow that other media sources which express certain political views may expand the Eurocentric data. The view of Soguk and Arsdale related to refugees as problematic and disruptive enjoys rich coverage in media discourse. Choosing to explore media discourse in other newspapers that are more subjective and politically influenced may enrich the data about Euro-centrism in the media.

But how should the integration of refugees in society be addressed? The media shapes social interaction, a fact that makes it a powerful tool in leaders' anti-migration discourse. States act in accordance to state interest and make use of humanistic approaches only when they are advantageous to them. Consequently, an efficient way to shape an integration discourse is to individualize people and present stories of people who succeed in reaching their goals. Moreover, the article about the foreign journalists from Syria, Somalia and other countries that addressed the problem of refugees from an inside view is illustrative.²¹

Another observation that we have to make in relation to media discourse relates to addressing alternatives. According to UNHCR statistics, refugees migrate to neighbouring countries because of their proximity.

Does coming to the European continent cause them to face severe difficulties? This is certainly the case. Still, they choose it.

Why? A possible answer concentrates on the lack of opportunities to continue their lives in the neighbouring countries and subsequently in the fact that they have no guarantee of any respect for their rights. Evaluating the main causes that led people towards risking their lives to reach Europe is essential. Then, we may all question for ourselves whether anti-migration is the best policy for protecting them.

²¹ BBC, "Refugees guest-edit Danish Newspaper Information", <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34490577>, Access date: October 9, 2015.

Exclusion, marginalization and exploitation represent major risks that refugees are exposed to, while factors such as low education, lack of language skills of the adopted country and lack of identification documents increase their social vulnerability and decrease the chances of integration.

Conclusion

The conducted research shows that Europe is still trapped in a post-colonial mentality, a fact that significantly influenced the way the media addressed migration in the last year. Deconstructing the concept “European Union” we notice that Europe is identified with terms like “civilized”, “rich”, “correct”, “generous”, while countries from Africa and Asia, which historically were European colonies, are represented as “underdeveloped”, “weak”, “disruptive”, “problematic”. In this context, the presented refugee crisis may be seen as an echo of the Movement of Decolonisation. The media approach towards the migration phenomenon from the last year validates this premise.

Drawing on this conclusion, it may be assumed that the socio-constructivist theory represents a substantial base for the analysis of how refugee migration escalated into a conflict of European identity. The impact of terrorism in the last period needs to be further explored in the context of illustrating the way migration was perceived by European society. In this context, it is important to mention the fragmented way of drafting policies in the context of the “refugee crisis” intertwined with the “criminalization of refugees”. Although masked in media discourse, identifying foreigners that come to Europe as “illegal” generated a negative identification of refugees. This way, refugees became a subject of exclusion and marginalization. Moreover, negative identification commingles with social interaction. In this process, the marginalized groups that are perceived as threats are fulfilling prophecy.

Social exclusion leads to disintegration and eventually groups that were marginalized become disruptive and problematic. Seen from this perspective, the crisis of European identity, mirrored by the absence of a unitary voice of European states in dealing with the migration situation from 2015, will deepen in the future. Preventing this situation should certainly be a priority of European countries. As finding solutions involves analysing the root causes, exploring

the way the topic of refugees was covered in the media in the first period of the crisis situation contributes to the understanding of the phenomenon. Ultimately, an understanding of the phenomenon encompasses finding solutions. Considering the results of the conducted analysis, supporting a positive identification of refugees in the media will diminish the climate of fear generated in European society. Further on, positive identification leads to integration reducing the fear of otherness, fear that is largely responsible for the unstable situation observed in Europe. The concept of the fear of otherness is ambivalent, thus stating that also refugees act on the basis of perceiving the other as a threat. Therefore, it is important to promote situations where individuals find common ground for interaction in spite of the existing differences.

The BBC media discourse shows positive examples of integration. It presents positive information about refugees, contributing this way to creating intercultural bridges. Presenting the events that happened in the last period with regard to refugees and migrants from the perspective of EU identity shows a path towards integration. In this respect, portraying examples of refugees that were integrated and of people who offered their help to refugees contributes towards creating an opposition to Euro-centrism and nationalistic views. Social interaction is therefore important in shaping a humanistic approach that “educates” people towards valuing diversity and multiculturalism. Still, social interaction needs to be promoted. The media are a powerful instrument in promoting it, as covering specific topics frames public opinion.

Addressing the concept of rights and individualizing refugees as migrants both by the BBC and other television stations will further contribute to “educating” people to surpass the fear of otherness. Besides, valuing people at the level of media discourse will contribute to directing states to act for people’s welfare, whether they are national citizens, EU citizens or foreigners. Humanistic principles need to be translated into practice, but this becomes a must for governments only if citizens demand it. The realist theory emphasizes that stability and state-interest are of primary concern for every country, with states acting on the basis of state interest. It follows that concern for human rights should become state interest. This happens when citizens appeal to their state to respect the principles of human rights.

In a nutshell, the refugee crisis from 2015 signalled an identity crisis that the European Union needs to overcome. A focus on multiculturalism and diversity may represent a solution to this crisis in the context of a global society. Taking

everything into account, it is noteworthy to mention that Europe has to surpass the remains of its post-colonial mentality in order to be able to cope with the challenges brought about by globalisation.

Limitations of the research

The present study needs to be further developed in order to show if the data are statistically significant. Thus, expanding the group of sources to at least 50 is necessary in order to better represent media discourse. Still, the way the media influence society is more complex and different media sources including television stations need to be explored. Despite being the most read publication around the world, the BBC is not necessarily the preferred source of information for EU citizens. Investigating the main sources of analysis of EU member states provides a lot of benefit in analysing how the media reflect particular societies and how societies are influenced by the media.

The results of the research were mostly influenced by the coding criteria developed by the researcher. As a consequence, the researcher bias influences the results and the way the results correlate to the first assumptions. The choice of some specific queries and charts also relates to researcher bias. Moreover, choosing the sources was influenced by the employed keyword and the researcher. In the situation where more articles that corresponded to the refugee query were from the same day, I chose the most relevant ones for the analysis. Sources and nodes homogeneity are other points that need to be taken into consideration while analysing the findings of the research.

Another additional point relates to the period when I conducted the query. Hence, the news articles present on the archive may change from week to week, being in a continuous dynamic of updating and reaching the audience.

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Annex 1

Results according to word frequency query

Word	Length	Count	WeightedPercentage (%)	SimilarWords
2015	4	546	2.71	2015
bbc	3	471	2.34	@bbc, bbc
migrants	8	416	2.06	migrant, migrants, migrants'
September	9	318	1.58	september
refugees	8	274	1.36	refugee, refugees, refugees'
news	4	205	1.02	news
crisis	6	182	0.90	crisis
europe	6	158	0.78	europe, 'europe, europe'
october	7	153	0.76	octob, october
syrian	6	116	0.58	syrian, syrians
help	4	113	0.56	help, helped, helpful, helping, helps