# DISCOURSES OF EXCLUSION: XENOPHOBIC LANGUAGE IN SERBIA DURING THE 2015 REFUGEE CRISIS

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With the exacerbation of the crisis caused by the expansion of the Islamic State in 2015 and the influx of refugees trying to cross the border of the European union from Serbia, a new wave of xenophobia and passportism has sweeped over Serbia. Even though there is a staunch presence of an anti-discriminatory, human rights based discourse, a strong xenophobic discourse can easily be found in the contemporary media and social networks. This article explores the language of discrimination against the refugees in Serbia in 2015 and the xenophobic discourse that was produced after the arrival of several hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing from the conflicts in the Middle East.

**Keywords**: passportism, xenophobia, Serbia, Critical Discourse Analysis, discrimination

'Language', as Habermas wrote in 1968, is a 'medium of domination and social force' that can 'legitimize relations of organized power'.[1] As Janks wrote, language 'can be used and is used to maintain existing forms of power'.[2] The use and misuse of language in order to maintain, create or overturn balances of power within societies and political communities has been studied widely, especially from the points of view of critical linguistics, critical discourse analysis and critical theory.[3] With the deepening of the conflict in the Middle East and the expansion of the Islamic State, millions of refugees have left towards the European Union on their way to commonly Germany and Scandinavia, their route taking them through Serbia. As the number and visibility of the refugees increased, so did the xenophobic response in the media and on social networks.

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[1] J. Habermas, *Erkenntnis und Interesse*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1968.

[2] H. Janks,. *Language, identity & power/[by] Hilary Janks; illustrations by Matt Sandham. Johannesburg: Hodder & Stoughton, in association with the Witwatersrand University Press, 1993.–iv, 24 pages.–(Critical language awareness series: materials for the classroom/edited by Hilary Janks).–ISBN 10: 0-947054-92-8*. Hodder & Stoughton, in association with the Witwatersrand University Press, 1993.

[3] R. Wodak, ed. *Language, power and ideology: Studies in political discourse*. Vol. 7. John Benjamins Publishing, 1989.; see also Barton, David, and Karin Tusting. *Beyond communities of practice: Language power and social context*. Cambridge University Press, 2005.

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When it comes to the Western Balkans, we are often talking about 'extreme xenophobia' in academic analyses,[1] though it is hard not to compare with the severe passportist discourse and policy introduced in Europe at the beginning of the 21st century, from the 'UK Border Force' documentary to Viktor Orban's wall pet-project. As Jan Gross wrote, 'as thousands of refugees pour into Europe to escape the horrors of war, with many dying along the way, a different sort of tragedy has played out in many of the European Union's newest member states. The states known collectively as "Eastern Europe," ... have revealed themselves to be intolerant, illiberal, xenophobic, and incapable of remembering the spirit of solidarity that carried them to freedom a quarter-century ago'.[2]

'Conventional wisdom has it that the Countries of Central and Eastern Europe are more susceptible to the scourge of racism and xenophobia than older market democracies', Muiznieks wrote in 2000, adding that this 'conventional wisdom of a region prone to racism, xenophobia and related pathologies should be taken with a grain of salt'.[3] True, after the wars of the Yugoslav secession, 'The Balkan crisis affected South-East Europe and triggered massive forced migrations which in turn brought about new manifestations of the issue of mobility and immigration in Europe. It seems that the answer is identical in all situation: glorification of security on the basis of state-of-the-art technologies'.[4] Yet we need to have in mind that at the beginning of the new millennium, immigration has yet again come to the fore of public interest, with a stronger-than-ever xenophobia running rampant across Europe. Katie Hopkins' idea about using 'gunships to stop migrants', comparing them to 'cockroaches', came from the UK.[5] Furthermore, one of the strongest anti-immigration campaign ever to be run took place in Austria and the

[1] M. Biro, D. Ajdukovic, D. Corkalo, D. Djipa, P. Milin, & H.M. *Weinstein Attitudes toward justice and social reconstruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia*. "My neighbor, my enemy: Justice and community in the aftermath of mass atrocity", (2004). 183-205.

[2] J.T. Gross, *Eastern Europe's Crisis of Shame,* in Social Europe, 2015, http://www.socialeurope.eu/ 2015/ 09/ eastern-europes-crisis-of-shame/

[3] N. Muiznieks, *The Struggle Against Racism and Xenophobia in Central and Eastern Europe: Trends, Obstacles and Prospects*. In "Background paper for the Regional Seminar of Experts on the Protection of Minorities and Other Vulnerable Groups and Strengthening Human Rights Capacity at the National Level". *UN document HR/WSW/SEM* (Vol. 2), 2000.

[4] S. Zavratnik-Zimic, *Constructing "New" Boundary: Slovenia and Croatia*. in: Revija za sociologiju, *34*(3-4), (2003), 179-188.

[5] K. Hopkins, *Rescue boats? I'd use gunships to stop migrants,* The Sun, 2015, http://www.thesun.co.uk/ sol/homepage/suncolumnists/katiehopkins/6414865/Katie-Hopkins-I-would-use-gunships-to-stop-migrants.html



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petition 'Austria first' by Jorg Heider in the early nineties. 'The "Austria First" campaign and the legal restrictions that came into force in 1993 were only the beginning of an anti-foreigner movement that recently culminated in the discriminatory anti-foreigner election campaign of 1999 for the seats in the national parliament'.[1] Analyzing the powerful xenophobia that seems to permeat European discourse throughout the centuries, Wodak and Reisigl wrote that 'this election campaign was worse than all the other public "xenophobic" discourses that had evolved since 1989, after the fall of the Iron Curtain. It was even worse than the Anti-Foreigner-Petition campaign of 1992 and 1993 … not only posters saying "Vienna is different" were to be seen, but provocative advertisements which claimed that the Austrian Freedom Party would be the guarantee to "stop the overforeignisation" ("*Überfremdung"* is a term that was used by the National-Socialist propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels in 1933) and leaflets with incredible racist statements, like the infamous claim that female foreigners were obtaining free hormone treatment in Viennese hospitals in order to be able to produce more children than "real Austrians", and that they would thus "take over"'.[2] Xenophobia has strong roots in Europe.

However, most of the work done on the topic of xenophobia in former Yugoslavia fall under the sub-category of nationalism, where xenophobia is seen commonly as the fear/hatred of the 'Balkan Other', that is, Serb vs Croat vs Bosniak.[3] Having said that, this article does not wish to compare xenophobic sentiments, discourses and policies in Serbia with those on the west, but instead concentrates on *contemporary xenophobic discourse in Serbia*, being constantly reminded that xenophobia is a shared sentiment for Europe in its entirety.

The question of Western European xenophobia is a standing one: 'What will be the future of the European migration policies that are primarily focused on

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[1] M. Resigl and R. Wodak, *Discourse and Discrimination. Rhetorics of racism and antisemitism,* Routledge, 2001.

[2] *Ibid*.

[3] G. Bowman, *Xenophobia, fantasy and the nation: The logic of ethnic violence in former Yugoslavia*. In: "Anthropology of Europe: Identity and boundaries in conflict", 1994, 143-171.; See also: M. Biro, D. Ajdukovic, D. Corkalo, D. Djipa, P. Milin, & H.M. *Weinstein Attitudes toward justice and social reconstruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia*. "My neighbor, my enemy: Justice and community in the aftermath of mass atrocity", (2004). 183-205; also: S. M. Saideman, and R. W. Ayres, *For kin or country: Xenophobia, nationalism, and war*. 2008, Columbia University Press.



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controlling migration (see: Brochmann and Hammar, 1999), that is to say, supervision of the mobility of people coming from the "third countries" situated outside the EU? The increasingly more universal fear of "intractable" global migration flows is probably the biggest threat to Europe after the bi-polar division into the "east-west" has been eliminated. Also, it is the foundation on which thrive increasingly more explicit identity panics and racist and xenophobic manifestations of hate-speech directed against foreigners.'[1] However, we shall concentrate on xenophobia within the Western Balkans, more precisely, in Serbia, asking a similar question: what are the current migration policies and discourses in Serbia and how are they dealing with the mobility of the people coming from the abovementioned 'third countries', especially with the escalation of the Islamic state crisis and the increasing number of immigrants from the Middle East? How are these issues represented by the media in the public discourse? What kind of language is being used?

## A discourse-based approach

Discourses 'play a decisive role in the genesis and production of certain social conditions. This means that discourses may serve to construct collective subjects like "races", nations and ethnicities. Second, they might perpetuate, reproduce or justify a certain social status quo (and "racialized", "nationalized" and "ethnicised" identities that are related to it). Third, they are instrumental in transforming the status quo (and "racialising concepts", nationalities and ethnicities related to it). Fourth, discursive practices may have an effect on the dismantling or even destruction of the status quo (and of racist, nationalist and ethnicist concepts related to it). According to these general aims one can distinguish between constructive, perpetuating, transformational and destructive social macro-functions of discourses.'[2] Thus, '"discourse" can be understood as a complex bundle of simultaneous and sequential interrelated linguistic acts that manifest themselves within and across the social fields of action as thematically interrelated semiotic, oral or written tokens, very often as "texts", that belong to specific semiotic types,

[1] S. Zavratnik-Zimic, *Constructing "New" Boundary: Slovenia and Croatia*. in: Revija za sociologiju, *34*(3-4), (2003), 179-188.
[2] M. Resigl and R. Wodak, *Discourse and Discrimination. Rhetorics of racism and antisemitism,* Routledge, 2001.



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i.e. genres.'[1] The texts that shall be analyzed are taken from typical xenophobic media in contemporary Serbia, including the reception of the texts themselves from the readers. Having said that, we shall understand texts 'as materially durable products of linguistic actions, as communicatively dissociated, "dilated" linguistic actions that during their reception are disembodied from their situation of production'[2].

**Passportist discourse in the media – three common article types**

From the beginning of 2015 and the mass exodus of refugees fleeing form the Islamic State (IS), articles claiming that 'Arabs...are going to impose a different culture and religion on us'[3] kept getting increasingly noticeable. There is a very prominent discursive feature among them, which is commonly a passportist/ xenophobic statement put forth in the title, after which the text of the snippet in point of fact runs contrary to the title. In the abovementioned article from the daily tabloid *Blic* by Sofija P. Špero, the title goes as follows: 'Arabs are buying houses and challets in Bačka, residents in fear: They are going to impose a different culture and religion on us'. However, the very text explains that 'the new owners do not plan to live in Serbia, but use the houses for vacations. They are all educated people with jobs in their countries, and they would visit during the summer for a couple of months'. In short, even though the information bit about non-residents buying houses does not even mention a possibility of 'imposing religion and culture', the very title is xenophobic per se. As Reisigl and Wodak wrote about racist discourse (having in mind that the same can be said about passportist discourse), it 'should

[1] *Ibid*.
[2] *Ibid*; see also: Ehlich, K. (1983) 'Text und sprachliches Handeln: Die Entstehung von Texten aus dem Bedürfnis nach Überlieferung', in: A. Assmann, J. Assmann and C. Hardmeier (eds) *Schrift und Gedächtnis. Beiträge zur Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation*, Munich: Fink, pp. 24–43; Graefen, G. (1997) *Der wissenschaftliche Artikel: Textart und Textorganisation*, Frankfurt am Main: Lang.
[3] S.P. Špero, *Arapi kupuju kuće i salaše po Bačkoj, meštani u strahu: Nametnuće nam drugu veru i kulturu,* Blic, 2015. http://www.blic.rs/Vesti/Vojvodina/583077/ Arapi-kupuju-kuce-i-salase-po-Backoj-mestani-u-strahu-Nametnuce-nam-drugu-veru-i-kulturu



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not be viewed as static and homogenous, but as dynamic and *contradictory'*.[1] This type of article uses bombastic language with false xenophobic statements commonly misrepresenting reality.

The second type of xenophobic language is found in articles that openly promote passportism. An example is the article shared often on local social media, entitled 'Masks down: Asylants'[2] by 'anonymous', in which uncorroborated evidence and articles without sources are given to present the refugees as rapists. A common feature in this type of article is the attack on anti-xenophobic NGOs and individuals:

> 'Mainstreem media have devoted more attention to illegal immigrants who have allegedly "condemned the attack on the woman" than to the very rape-attempt victim. Already the day after, the Soros-ite NGO cults have put up posters in Belgrade parks with texts "Stop the violence towards the immigrants". The fact that the illegal immigrants are perpetrators, and not victims of violence, does not interest the Soros-ites too much. What was left is for the director for the import of immigrants and ebola ... to publicly thank the "asylum seekers" for the rape ... To the great joy of the director of the NGO center for the import of illegal immigrants, asylants are not only staying – they are going to receive reinforcements ...'[3]

There are more than seveal discursive moments that need to be addressed here. First of all, there is the relatively standard discursive tactic in which immigrants are presented as law-breakers and importers of chaos.[4] Not so long ago, though, in Western Europe, 'new immigrants from the former Eastern Bloc countries [were] seen as lazy, dirty, criminal and (as far as men are concerned) as sexually threatening. In general, the so-called "foreigners" are seen as noisy and idle, as outrageous "parasites" who take advantage of the social welfare system, as an economic threat by leading to an increase in unemployment rates, as being unwilling to integrate and assimilate, and thus as a threat of the national and cultural identity

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[1] M. Resigl and R. Wodak, *Discourse and Discrimination. Rhetorics of racism and antisemitism,* Routledge, 2001.
[2] http://anon.in.rs/?p=3667#.VdPduEj1wg8.facebook
[3] *Ibid*.
[4] Even outside of Serbia, similar articles are easy to find. A prominent example is that of a 'viral' picture of an immigrant allegedly waiving an ISIS flag, reported later to have been false ('It is old, probably not an ISIS flag and has nothing to do with refugees'): http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/isis-flag-picture-that-claims-to-show-refugees-attacking-police-goes-viral--and-is-a-lie-10501290.html



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by "over-infiltration" and "inundation".'[1] This strategy is nowadays used for misrepresenting refugees from IS, in a form of *synecdochisation*, where a 'a specific feature, trait or characteristic is selectively pushed to the fore as a 'part for the whole', as a representative depictor',[2] as well as *collectivisation.*[3]

The third group is represented by a type of discourse is which not too many grandiloquent lexical choices are used, where immigrants are not represented as murderers and rapists, but instead offers an allegedly justified 'concern' about 'the underestimation of the immigrant problem [that] could pose as significant danger for our state as a social, economical, security and health risk', as it was put by Boško Obradović, frontman to the Right-Wing extremist movement *Dveri srpske*.[4] In an interview conducted by the regional N1 television network on August 2015, he proposed the building of a wall between Serbia and Macedonia, as to throttle the influx of immigrants, not unlike the fence built by the Hungarian government during the summer of 2015. He claimed that this was not an idea put forth by the Dveri movement, but by the European Union, which strengthens the description of xenophobic discourse as contradictive, having in mind that the Dveri stand against the European Union – what is more, the opposition to Serbia's EU ascension is one of the highlights of their already shallow political program. The wall is supposed to 'simply protect one's own population'. This is yet another case in which a synecdochised discourse is used to the arguer's own benefit, where one EU member state (Hungary) served as a representative for the whole Union. Any discriminative discourse is prone to use any and all means available in order to further its agenda.

A categorizing table with the three abovementioned types of xenophobic articles with short descriptions can be found below:

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[1] M. Resigl and R. Wodak, *Discourse and Discrimination. Rhetorics of racism and antisemitism,* Routledge, 2001.

[2] *Ibid*., see also E. N. Zimmerman, *Identity and difference: The logic of synecdochic reasoning*, in: "Texte. Revue de Critique et de Théorie Littéraire", 1989, Vols 8–9, pp. 25–62.

[3] M. Resigl and R. Wodak, *Discourse and Discrimination. Rhetorics of racism and antisemitism,* Routledge, 2001.

[4] B92, *Dveri hoće zid protiv izbegllica, NVO negoduju,* 2015, http://www.b92.net/video/vesti.php?yyyy=2015&mm=08&dd=24&nav_id=1030835



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| ARTICLE CLASSIFICATION | Discourse/language description |
|---|---|
| **Type A**<br>Articles with passportist **titles.** | The title is xenophobic, but the article itself is not. The title misrepresents reality, which is then shown in the very body of the article. Clear semantic and/or epistemological collision between the title and the text. |
| **Type B**<br>Articles with a **clear passportist/discriminatory agenda.** | Unbridled, rampant xenophobia. A clear-cut passportist discourse, severe misrepresentations of reality, strong, insulting language. Highly connected to racism. |
| **Type C**<br>Articles with a **discursively constructed 'legitimate' worry about the immigrant 'problem'.** | A standardized type of discriminatory discourse used by political players. Xenophobic language is covered by an alleged care for one's own country. Highly connected to nationalism. |

*Table 1.1 Passportist media text types A, B and C*

Any type of xenophobic text in today's Serbia can be classified in one of the three abovegiven text types based on the language it uses.

### Hate gallore: online comments

With the advent of online media, comments left by readers have increasingly been set under scrutiny by the scholarly community.[1] Online readers' comments have been called a 'new opinion pipeline',[2] as well as 'a highly visible, unique, and important challenge for information in local and online communities. The unique aspects of these communities include often-volatile participation patterns, imbalance between professional and amateur content, and interaction between

[1] S. Faridani, et al. *Opinion space: a scalable tool for browsing online comments.* Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems. ACM, 2010., C. Nielsen, *Newspaper journalists support online comments*. "Newspaper Research Journal" 33.1 (2012): 86., C. E. Nielsen, *Coproduction or cohabitation: Are anonymous online comments on newspaper websites shaping news content?*. "New Media & Society" 16.3 (2014): 470-487.

[2] A.D. Santana, *Online readers' comments represent new opinion pipeline.* "Newspaper Research Journal" 32.3 (2011): 66.



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regular users and other actors in various official capacities'.[1] Having the abovementioned in mind, we can take a closer look at the user comments on significant Right-Wing organizations' websites, a prime example of which (for Serbia) is the *Nova srpska politička misao* (New Serbian Political Thought, NSPM).[2]

> 'You take from our retired people and the employed, and with it you help those who used to cut our heads off in Republika Srpska, and you hold Serbs from the Krajina in fallen apart cabins in collective centers.'
> '...migrants have illegally crossed the Serbian border and hurt its territorrial sovereignity.'
> '...only dross and sludge remain in Serbia. We resemble a sink drain more and more.'
> '...everybody in the EU is afraid of the migrant problem, only we in Serbia accept them wholeheartedly, even with all other problems.'
> 'The Cyrillic script is being cancelled in Serbia. It has even been banished from the Serbian Radio and Television's children's program. When it comes to the refugees, it was all arranged with Angela when she was here, let us not fool ourselves.'
> 'How many migrants exit Serbia daily?'
> 'When is a mass of people of unknown language and behavioral norms, numbering over 100,000, regarded as potentially dangerous for the standard, property or life of the local population? ... Is this about territory seizure without the announcement of war ...?'

The comments above represent a relatively standardized depicion of the hate speech often seen on the NSPM in 2015. The online system accepts comments only if they are approved by the editors, indicating strongly that passportism and xenophobia is widely accepted by its editorial board.

The general view of the Islamic State in the Serbian community is negative, though it can be argued that the negative view is based primarily on the difference in religion, and a staunch hatred of Islam *per se.* However, even though one could

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[1] N. Diakopoulos and N. Mor, *Towards quality discourse in online news comments*. Proceedings of the ACM 2011 conference on Computer supported cooperative work. ACM, 2011.

[2] Tanjug-Blic-Beta, *Aleksandar Vučić migrantima: Uvek ste dobrodošli u našu zemlju; Podići ćemo prihvatni centar za izbeglice, povećati plate i penzije; Ako gospoda žele, mogući vanredni parlamentarni izbori*, in: Nova srpska politička misao, 2015, http://www.nspm.rs/component/option,com_yvcomment/ArticleID,138036/url,aHR0cDovL3d3dy5uc3BtLnJzL2hyb25pa2EvdnVjaWMtZGFuYXMtb2JpbGF6aS1taWdyYW50ZS11LXBhcmt1LWtvZC1iZW9ncmFkc2tlLWF1dG9idXNrZS1zdGFuaWNlLmh0bWwjeXZDb21tZW50MTM4MDM2/view,comment/#yvComment138036



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expect a positive view of the people trying to *flee* the Islamic state (it would be hard to imagine a person trying to flee a location/ ideology they approve of), the situation can be classified as a complete opposite. This is a well-known issue in discriminative discourse. We can make a parallel between contemporary Serbian xenophobic discourse aimed against ISIS refugees with the study of Austrians' attitudes towards Romanians before and after the fall of the Iron Curtain by the end of the 1908s by Matouschek, Wodak and Janushek.[1] 'One of the most striking findings was that the politicians' debates, addresses and interviews as well as the mass media reports showed a tendency subsequently to shift from expressing and declaring compassion with the Romanians who were dictatorially terrorised, intimidated, tormented, and repressed by Ceauscescu's regime, to a more or less arrogant "we-are-better" and patronising advising of how to reform Romania and implement democratic structures, and to the attempt to justify economically the rejection of the absorption and integration of Romanian asylum-seekers and refugees in Austria.'[2] In other words, once Romanians became asylum-seekers in Austria, the attitudes towards them shifted significantly. 'After the Romanian "revolution" in December 1989, the apparent initial sympathy soon gave way both to manifest protests against Romanian asylum seekers depicted negatively by manifest racist, that is to say, phenotypical, visible attributions of unpleasant appearance, criminal disposition and propensity to sexual violence, and to disguising rationalisations of the rejection by putting forward economic reasons – like costs, the "unbearable" number of the refugees endangering Austria's socioeconomic stability, and the Romanians' non-vitally necessary economic motivation for migration (keyword: "economic refugees") – as an excuse.'[3] The same is happening in Serbia in 2015, where xenophobes are presenting the refugees as 'people of unknown language and behavioral norms', who are 'regarded as potentially dangerous', 'hurting Serbia's territorial sovereignty'. Another common issue is to present 'us' as warm and welcoming in the face of an impending disasiter ('everybody in the EU is afraid of the migrant problem, only we in Serbia accept them wholeheartedly, even with all

[1] B. Matouschek, R. Wodak, and F. Januschek, *Notwendige Maßnahmen gegen Fremde? Genese und Formen von rassistischen Diskursen der Differenz*, Vienna, 1995, Passagen Verlag.
[2] M. Resigl and R. Wodak, *Discourse and Discrimination. Rhetorics of racism and antisemitism,* Routledge, 2001.
[3] *Ibid*.



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other problems'), as discriminatory discourse uses both *positive self-presentation* and the *negative presentation of the Other*.[1]

Furthermore, the *topos of threat* is easily identifiable in such discriminatory language. This is a type of discourse that will claim that 'if too many immigrants or refugees enter the country, the native population will not be able to cope with the situation and will become hostile to foreigners. This argument scheme can lead to a victim-victimiser reversal. It was employed by the Austrian government after the Second World War to argue antisemitically for the prevention of remigration and 'reparation' of Austrian Jews driven out of their country (see Knight 1988).'[2]

Another important instance is the *reversal to victimhood*, in which the xenophobe presents him- or herself as the victim ('You take from our retired people and the employed, and with it you help those who used to cut our heads off in Republika Srpska, and you hold Serbs from the Krajina in fallen apart cabins in collective centers', 'The Cyrillic script is being cancelled in Serbia. It has even been banished from the Serbian Radio and Television's children's program. When it comes to the refugees, it was all arranged with Angela when she was here, let us not fool ourselves'). The *Intermagazin* published an article with the title 'Why have we forgotten Serbian refugees? Here is how they live!',[3] in which the focus from the topos of the refugee is entirely shifted towards the war of the Yugoslav seccesion in the 1990s and the life of Serbian refugees nowadays.

A comparison between the refugees of the 1990s with the refugees from ISIS in 2015 is a topic explored by many a passportist, among others, the director of the Novi Sad Cultural Center and an assistant professor at the Faculty of Philology and Arts in Kragujevac, one Andrej Fajgelj. In a severely xenophobic article (published both in Serbo-Croatian and English on his personal webpage) entitled '10 reasons why migrants are NOT like Serbian refugees',[4] he propounded the following:

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[1] *Ibid*.

[2] M. Resigl and R. Wodak, *Discourse and Discrimination. Rhetorics of racism and antisemitism,* Routledge, 2001; see also R. Knight, (ed.)' *"Ich bin dafür, die Sache in die Länge zu ziehen": Die Wortprotokolle der österreichischen Bundesregierung von 1945 bis 1952 über die Entschädigung der Juden*, 1988, Frankfurt: Athenäum.

[3] Author not signed, *Zašto smo zaboravili srpske izbeglice? – Evo kako oni žive!* In: Intermagazin, 2015, http://www.intermagazin.rs/zasto-smo-zaboravili-srpske-izbeglice-evo-kako-oni-zive/

[4] A. Fajgelj, *10 reasons why migrants are not like Serbian refugees,* http://andrej.fajgelj.com/10-reasons-why-migrants-are-not-like-serbian-refugees/



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1. Serbian refugees didn't have the support of media propaganda. Pictures of children were not massively used worldwide to elicit maximum compassion. On the contrary, media propaganda was used against Serbian refugees.
2. Serbian refugees didn't leave families behind. Most of the migrants are men. They save themselves and leave the women and children to the enemy?
3. Serbian refugees were not deserters. Waves of refugees from Krajina and Kosovo ensued only after the collapse of the army and the state. Why migrants of military age do not stay to fight against the Islamic state?
4. Serbian refugees were fleeing to the first country. Migrants are moving halfway across the world.
5. Serbian refugees went on their own. Migrants are trafficked by the Mafia.
6. Serbian refugees went from danger to safety. Most of the migrants are going the opposite way. This was also the case of the tragic Kurdi family, which was not in danger before risking the sea crossing in the hands of the mafia, and drowning.
7. Serbian refugees were running for their lives. The migrants are fleeing for a better life, cherry-picking the countries with the highest standard of living.
8. Serbian refugees were not aggressive. Migrants clash with police when they try to identify them, throw women and children on the rails because their train is stopped.
9. Serbian refugees were not falsely representing themselves. No tricks, they were indeed Serbs who fled from war and ethnic cleansing. Migrants are presented as Syrian refugees, when in fact they come from different parts of the world, from Nigeria to Bangladesh, where there is no war at all. Many only use migrant crisis to cross the borders without control. This includes a huge number of economic migrants, as well as thousands of terrorists of the Islamic state. Statistically, it is not the threat of war in Syria that is characteristic for the greatest part of migrants, but the fact that they are Muslim men of military age.
10. Serbian refugees came to Serbia. Non-European migrants are settling in Europe, Muslims are migrating to Christian countries (which is called *Hijrah* in Islam). Why not much closer Muslim Gulf countries?

Shifting the ontological focus entirely towards Serbian refugees during the 1990 Yugoslav wars (whilst, in addition, completely disregarding Bosnian and Croat refugees from the same conflict), Fajgelj uses a wide array of discursive formations to present a xenophobic agenda, from representing the refugees as monsters ('throwing women and children on the rails', *sic!*) to entering a completely



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victimized discourse about Serbian refugees from two decades ago. By using the refugee crisis of the 1990s, he brings the discourse 'closer to home', trying to sway the reader with an emotional response, since many of the instances given above are misrepresentations of reality (presenting the Syrian refugees as violent, claiming that they are not fleeing for their lives *etc*).

## Conclusion

The language of hate, prejudice and discrimination is a social, linguistic and political reality, and as such, it has to be followed and scrutinized diligently and frequently. With the ISIS refugee crisis having developed (at the time of the writing of this article in the summer of 2015, not only does it show no promise of diminishing, but seems to be expanding), and having in mind that xenophobic discourses (and political and social policies stemming from these discourses) are expanding throughout Europe, a strong, unified academic response needs to be conducted in a rigorous analysis of the language (and subsequently proposed and implemented policies based on such discourses) of hatred and xenophobia.

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