Migrant speeches: strategies for representing *us* and *them* in opinion journalistic discourse

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Abstract

This study analyses the press coverage of the migratory flow towards Europe in a period of intense visibility of this issue in the Portuguese press (September and October 2015), in a *corpus* of opinion texts and titles of other journalistic texts from three generalist reference publications at the national level. It draws on theoretical assumptions and methodological tools of discourse analysis, taken in a broad sense (Adam, 2011; Berthoud & Mondada, 1995; Charaudeau, 1997, Moirand 1999, 2006; Rabatel & Chauvin-Vileno 2006, nomeadamente), to describe and analyse the discursive construction of images of migrants in contrast to those of Europeans, with emphasis on the personal deixis, lexical choices and modalization processes marked in discourses. It concludes that the media discourse was fundamental in the discursive construction of the social event led by the massive arrival of refugees and migrants in Europe. This construction is structured around two groups, *us* and *them*. In the referenciation activity carried out, there is a process of categorization and recategorization that points to the construction of a homogeneous group, *they*, *the others*, around different designations, but mostly around the designation "refugee". In contrast to such homogeneity, the group formed by *us, the Europeans*, is fractured by disagreements about values, often marked in oppositional parallel structures. The ways in which discursive referenciation is constructed, which call for shared knowledge about the war, and the evaluative modality frame the position of the locutors-enunciators involved in the construction of public opinion and give the speeches a strong emotional feature.

Keywords

migrants; refugees; media; deixis; referenciation

Discursos migrantes: estratégias de construção de *nós* e os *outros* em discursos jornalísticos de opinião

Resumo

O presente estudo analisa o tratamento mediático do fluxo migratório em direção à Europa num período de intensa visibilidade da questão na imprensa nacional (setembro e outubro de 2015), num *corpus* de textos de opinião e títulos de outros textos jornalísticos de três publicações generalistas de referência no âmbito nacional. Recorre aos fundamentos teóricos e aos instrumentos metodológicos da análise do(s) discurso(s), tomada em sentido amplo (Adam, 2011; Berthoud & Mondada, 1995; Charaudeau, 1997, Moirand 1999, 2006; Rabatel & Chauvin--Vileno 2006, nomeadamente), para descrever e analisar a construção discursiva das imagens

dos migrantes em contraste com as dos europeus, com saliência para a dêixis pessoal, as esco-lhas lexicais e os processos de modalização, marcados nos discursos. Conclui que o discurso dos média foi fundamental para a construção discursiva do acontecimento social protagonizado pela chegada massiva de refugiados e migrantes à Europa. Essa construção articula-se em torno de dois grupos, *nós* e *eles*. Na atividade de referenciação levada a cabo, ocorre um processo de categorização e recategorização que aponta para a construção de um grupo homogéneo, *eles*, os *outros*, em torno de diferentes designações, mas maioritariamente em torno da designação "re-fugiado". Em contraste com tal homogeneidade, o grupo constituído por *nós*, os *europeus*, está fraturado por dissensos em torno de valores, frequentemente marcados em estruturas parale-lísticas opositivas. Os modos de referenciação, que convocam o conhecimento partilhado sobre a guerra, e a modalidade avaliativa enquadram o posicionamento dos locutores-enunciadores envolvidos na construção da opinião pública e conferem aos discursos uma vertente emocional forte.

Introduction

Europe has been confronted with the huge social issue of refugees. Echoes of the social reaction are presented and represented in the press. Images and identities of *us*, the Europeans, and of *others* the "clandestine, then migrants, exiles and, finally, refu-gees", as referred by Rui Cardoso (2015, p. 29), are proposed and confronted.

Media discourse is, therefore, fundamental for the construction and diffusion of representations about the world and events that mark society. However, the media do not portray reality, but actively create it (Charaudeau, 1997).

Acknowledging this predominance, it can even be said that the media play a more powerful social role than other institutions in scheduling social life. Nash (2005, p. 18) attributes even greater influence to them than other traditional institutions such as the family, religion or even educational systems.

In particular, in the context of the discursive activity that relates to a specific jour-nalistic genre, the opinion article, the role of opinion makers is highlighted. We took the statement of this centrality of the media in today's society from van Dijk (2005, p. 37), alongside, as he says, other elite groups, such as politicians, businessmen or teachers. Media power is a "discursive and symbolic" power that influences anonymous citizens, but also the elite.

Assuming that this media relevance is also present in Portuguese society, we aim to analyse how the images of migrants/refugees and Europeans, actors in complex situ-ations with interests that are not always convergent, are constructed in the opinion texts conveyed by the mainstream press. It is a fundamental contribution to the elucidation of the discursive representation of the migrant flow to Europe, "the human being in tran-sit" (Nolasco, 2015, p. 47), which marked the current Portuguese journalism throughout 2015 and 2016 and has, since then, maintained a latent, less marked presence.

The main objective of the study is, therefore, to identify the discursive construction of the images of migrants in contrast to Europe in opinion texts published in Portuguese newspapers during an intense period of media coverage of the situation (September and October, 2015). Writers are part of this; thus, the construction of *us* and *them*, heterogeneous group identities, diversely represented and valued, is under debate in the media. The temporal distance that characterizes the analysis allows for increased objectivity.

In particular, the intention is to identify and analyse the modes of construction in the discourse of the migratory movement of refugees to Europe, represented as *them*, the *others* (and their respective contexts of occurrence); to analyse the discursive construction of Europeans, as *us* (with the various realities in confrontation and convergence); and, finally, to analyse the construction of the discursive relationship established between *us* and *them*.

In order to scrutinize these processes of discursive referenciation of "migrants" and of the Western world, we will give special attention to different linguistic-discursive mechanisms, but with emphasis on personal deixis and the lexical choices made by the locutors.

Theoretical and methodological framework

Concerning the Portuguese context, it is possible to track a significant set of recent investigations claiming to study discursive issues combining migrants and the media (for example, Abdo, Cabecinhas & Brites, 2019; Almeida, 2017; Barbosa, 2012; Costa, 2010; Macedo & Cabecinhas, 2012; Oliveira, 2011; Santos, 2016; Silva, 2017). Several of these associate and analyse the media and migrants and some of them with a particular focus on ethnic minorities or on women's issues in this context (Cádima & Figueiredo, 2003; Carvalho, 2007; Ferin & Santos, 2008; Galante, 2010; Santos, 2007; Silvestre, 2011; Togni, 2008); however, it should be noted that such studies fall mainly in the fields of Communication Sciences and Ethnology, to the detriment of approaches made from Language Sciences. Apparently, this subject has not been selected as an object of analysis by experts in the field. In fact, the studies identified above mainly carry out content analysis, complemented with some qualitative approach; none of them falls within the theoretical-methodological framework of the pragmatic studies of discourse[1]. As van Dijk (2005) says, the analysis of the language in use, that is, in context, focusing on the discursive strategies and complex structures that configure the journalistic texts selected[2], is important for the understanding of this social phenomenon. This theoretical and methodological framework goes beyond the approach of journalistic pieces taken as linguistically transparent messages according to content analysis focused solely on quantitative methods.

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[1] Although several of the studies referred to claim the use of "techniques provided by critical discourse analysis" (Silvestre 2011, p. V) to comply with the qualitative analysis procedures.

[2] We will use here *text* and *discourse* in the perspective proposed by Adam (2011).

In the context of the discursive-enunciative approach adopted here, discourses are considered as social linguistic practices (Bakhtine, 1984); the attention to their social, cultural, contextual and linguistic construction determines the present analysis. For the analysis of the construction of the selected discourse objects[3], we take as fundamental authors Berthoud and Mondada (1995), Cavalcante (2003, 2012), Koch and Cortez (2015); Marchuschi (2006), Moirand and Reboul-Touré (2015), Moirand (2016), Mondada (2001), Mondada and Dubois (1995), and Rabatel and Chauvin-Vileno (2006), among others. Highlighting the referential capacity of language, the referenciation theory interrelates enunciation and reference, in an extension of Benveniste's proposals, moreover (1970). Berthoud and Mondada (1995, p. 206) return to this question when they state that

> each word establishes, at the moment when it is uttered, the universe of which it speaks; it offers objects of discourse, which do not exist before it but which emerge in the act of enunciation and are transformed as it unfolds or as others are linked to it.

Referenciation is inseparable from the locutor's enunciative position and, therefore, from the enunciative responsibility inherent to it (Marques, 2018)[4].

The linguistic choices made by the locutor in the referenciation process to categorize and re-categorize the objects of discourse, particularly at the level of the lexicon, contribute decisively to the construction of shared cultural beliefs, in the words of Nash (2005).

For the present analysis, opinion texts – opinion articles and editorials – and titles of other journalistic articles were selected from the written press, published in three generalist publications of national reference: the weekly magazine *Visão*, the daily newspaper *Público* and the weekly *Expresso*, taken as representative of the "global media power" (van Dijk 2005, p. 37) in Portuguese society. These data are for the months of September and October 2015, a period of particular intensity in the production of news about refugees arriving in Europe. The frightening numbers of drowning deaths and the unexpected and shocking image of a dead child on a clandestine embarkation beach in Turkey in early September 2015 heightened the mediatic importance of this problem due to their emotional effects.

Data selection involved the identification of all occurrences of the lexemes *refugee*, *migrant* and *immigrant* in opinion articles and editorials. To link these occurrences to the information journalistic texts, the same words were collected in the headlines and subtitles of the news, with emphasis on the occurrence on the first page of the publications.

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[3] It is about "propose a way to construct and discursively structure a world in an intersubjective space" (Berthout & Mondada, 1995, p. 206)

[4] "It is the enunciative responsibility inherent to the fact that the locutor is at the origin of the enunciation, of the discourse in which he participates, because he must make choices and outline discursive strategies, within the necessarily regulatory framework of genre, interlocutors, objectives and institutional space in which he is integrated. He must (...) manage the discourse. In particular, he has to structure it, and determine which voices to call, as well as where and how to make them heard. In the important function of referenciation, he must choose the words to designate the discourse objects" (Marques, 2013, pp. 147-148).

The lexicon interests us as part of the global unity that is the discourse. Therefore, attention to the co-text of the occurrences is necessary in order to show the construction of these discursive objects.

The discursive construction of others: "them, refugees, migrants …"

Political-social framework

With daily visibility, the drama of refugees fleeing to Europe remained on the media agenda over the months under analysis – September and October 2015. Such a time span highlights the importance it assumed and its impact on Portuguese society. In fact, it should be taken into account that this subject coexisted with a very relevant Portuguese political agenda in social and media terms, with the end of the electoral campaign for the Portuguese parliament and the respective elections, with the post-electoral political crisis (formation of the government, its fall, formation of a new government supported, for the first time in the history of Portuguese democracy, by a parliamentary alliance of the parties of the left), with the end of the presidential term and the beginning of a new electoral campaign for the presidency of the Republic. Attentions and social concerns focused on internal issues, especially economic ones, at the end of a period of external financial support and a severe setback in the income of Portuguese families, alongside a period of austerity that generated many problems in individuals, companies and the state. More than enough conditions were in place for the problem of migrants/refugees to be quickly pushed into marginal spaces in relation to the centrality of articles dealing with the internal political struggles and the professional and personal concerns of the Portuguese. Even so, over the period under analysis, the issue of refugees arriving in Europe received permanent and prominent media treatment (in front-page titles, accompanied by photographs, highlights, opinion articles and individualized publication spaces).

Media framing

In terms of media coverage, there was an event that aroused a peak of public interest on the issue of refugees: the publication, on social networks and in the media, of the photograph of a child, Aylan[5], three years old, drowned and thrown by the sea onto a Turkish beach. The photograph of the child shocked public opinion and generated an intensification of all media coverage, which was reflected in multiple articles of different genres[6].

Media coverage of the refugee issue has benefited from the participation of multiple social actors (namely, journalists, columnists, politicians, human rights activists,

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[5] Aylan or Alan – the first is the name in Turkish, the second is in Kurdish.

[6] In its September 03 edition, *Público* published the photograph of Aylan on the front page. Given the controversy generated by the media's diffusion of the photograph, the newspaper needed to justify the fact in its editorial on page 44. On page four, it published another photograph of the child being carried by a police officer. A first page title ("Why we publish this photo") refers to the editorial where this justification is presented. *Expresso* was resume the first image in a cartoon on the front page in its September 12 edition.

university professors). It can be said that a heterogeneous discourse was produced on the subject, in terms of discursive genre typology and discourse-producing agents.

With regard to the authors of opinion and editorial texts[7], the following tables make it possible to identify the voices that were expressed in the publications under analysis.

Name	Profil	Texts
Acácio Pereira	President of the Union of Investigation and Inspection Career of the Foreigners and Borders Service (SEF)	1
Álvaro Vasconcelos	Researcher	2
Carlos Coelho	PSD deputy in the European Parliament	1
Carlos Nolasco	Sociologist	1
Cláudia Semedo	Ambassador of the European Year for Development in Portugal	1
Domingos Lopes	Lawyer	1
Ester Mucznik	Specialist in Jewish affairs	1
Frei Bento Domingues	Friar	3
Guilherme d'Oliveira Martins	President of the National Culture Centre	1
Gustavo Cardoso	Sociologist	1
João Ferreira da Cruz	Economist	1
João Miguel Tavares	Journalist	2
José Manuel Diogo	Information and communications specialist	1
Manuela Niza Ribeiro	President of the SEF Employees Union and university professor	2
Maria João Rodrigues	Vice-President of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament	1
Paul Schmidt	Ambassador of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg to Portugal	1
Paulo Mendes Pinto	University professor	1
Paulo Rangel	European deputy (PSD)	1
Pedro Góis	University professor and researcher	1
Raquel Varela	Historian	1
Ricardo Cabral	Economist, university professor	1
Rui Zink	Writer	1

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[7] In *Público* and *Expresso*, the editorials are not signed and, therefore, were not considered in the tables below.

Sigmar Gabriel and Frank-Walter Steinmeier	German Minister of Economy; German Minister of Foreign Affairs	1
Teresa Sousa	Journalist	2
Vasco Pulido Valente	Columnist	1

Table 1: *Público* opinion articles

Name	Profil	Texts
Augusto Küttner	Citizen	1
Carlos Coelho	European deputy	1
Daniel Oliveira	Regular columnist	1
David Owen	International journalist	1
Diogo Oliveira	Citizen	1
Elisabete de Oliveira	Citizen	1
Elisabeth de Oliveira	Citizen	1
Fernando Carneiro	Citizen	1
Henrique Raposo	Regular columnist	2
Maria de Belém Roseira	Portuguese presidential candidate	1
Mário Jesus	Citizen	1
Martim Avillez Figueiredo	Regular columnist	1
Miguel Monjardino	Regular columnist	3
Miguel Sousa Tavares	Regular columnist	1
Rui Cardoso	Journalist	1

Table 2: *Expresso* opinion articles

Name	Profil	Texts
Augusto Küttner de Magalhães	Citizen	1
João Garcia	Director	1

Klára Breuer	Ambassador of Hungary in Lisbon	1
Mafalda Anjos	Deputy director	1
Maria da Silva Jesus	Citizen	1
Pedro Camacho	Regular columnist	1
Pedro Norton	Regular columnist	2
Thomas Piketty	French academic	1
Vítor Ângelo	Regular columnist	3

Table 3: *Visão* opinion and editorial articles

These tables present intense discursive activity involving a wide range of individuals, among regular collaborators whose function is to comment on the national and international situation. Among them are journalists and politicians, but also anonymous citizens to whom the directors of the publications decide to give visibility, publishing their "Letters to the director" in the respective section.

Two types of thematic organization stand out: alongside a framework on general geopolitical, historical and cultural issues, there is sometimes a framework based on the opinion maker's particular and personal cases, in life experience narratives, which serve as a starting point for further generalizations.

It should be noted that, as we will see, the Portuguese media clearly assume a favourable position on the reception of refugees, marked by the evaluative modality[8] shown in the texts, but also give some visibility to who argue for rejecting the refugees. Regarding Portugal, these positions of rejection are manifested only in the letters to the director, through the voice of ordinary "anonymous" citizens (in terms of social notoriety, only, since the authorship of the letters is indicated). The rejections in terms of positions taken in the European space are mainly conveyed in informative articles and titles. We put it as an explanatory hypothesis that this attitude, identified in the three publications under analysis, may be due to the fact that opinion makers assume an attitude of "responsibility", in the sense that Moirand (2006) speaks of it, that is, marked by ethics and morality. As such, they are unable to reject or propose the refusal of people who are fighting for their survival and fleeing a war scenario, in which they are in a position of helpless victims. Only persons who are less socially committed, such anonymous citizens who decide to write "letters to the director", manifest a countercurrent and a position which is less committed to ethics. However, the newspaper decides to give them a voice, out of respect for the exercise of freedom of expression.

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[8] On the theoretical discussion around the concepts of modalization, modality and modalizer, see Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1983), Vion (2004) and Monte (2011), among others.

Construction of the discourse object "refugee, migrant, immigrant"/"them"
Quantification of occurrences

The collection of occurrences of the lexical items under analysis, *refugee*, *migrant* or *immigrant* (referring to individuals from the Middle East or Africa moving to Europe) in opinion texts, which guided the analysis, shows the results presented in the following table.

Publications	Editions (total)	Editions (including the lexical items analysed)	Editions (date)
Público	61	46	September: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 October: 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 25, 26, 27, 29
Expresso	9	7	September: 5, 12, 19, 26 October: 2, 10, 31
Visão	9	8	September: 3, 10, 17 October: 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

Table 4: Quantification of occurrences

It stands out that, in the period under study, and considering only the newspaper *Público*, 75,4% of the copies contain opinion articles where the words refugee, migrant or immigrant occur. Regarding the weekly *Expresso*, the percentage is 77,7% for the same words. In *Visão*, the percentage is 88,8%.

Finally, considering the two months under analysis, *Público* is almost obsessive about this subject during the month of September, with occurrences of the three lexical items in opinion texts in all editions throughout the month. In the month of October, the incidence decreases, but even so there are occurrences registered in more than half of the editions.

In the other two publications, the incidence is also very high in almost all editions of the analysed period. In addition, especially in the weekly *Expresso* and the magazine *Visão*, in several cases all editions contain several opinion articles that deal with the subject in question.

Thus, these words will function as designations of specific individuals or groups but also as "mots-événements" (Moirand, 2006), that is, expressions that evoke certain events or frames, appealing to the reader's interdiscursive memory.

The categorization of the discourse object as "refugee"

The search for the proper designation of discourse objects is one of the dimensions of the referenciation process. Journalists and other columnists themselves highlight this importance.

Analysis of the selected articles shows that the designation "refugee" is clearly the most frequent, given the various options that occur to designate these "human beings in

transit". According to the frequency of occurrences, the term had the capacity to impose itself in relation to the remaining terms that co-occur to designate the same object of discourse[9].

But other lexical items or constructions also evoke the circumstances of refugees. These include, for example, terms such as "displaced", "asylum seeker", "exile", "clandestine" or "fugitive", all, however, with far fewer occurrences, but fundamental choices for categorization of the discursive referent.

In some cases, the combination "refugees and migrants", probably because this is the formula recommended by UNHCR – the United Nations agency for refugees –, amalgamates different discourse objects in the same compound designation, a divergent process from the point of view of the governmental organizations, in particular[10].

The option for "refugees" selects war as a framing topic (with the procession of refugees that it provokes, also associated with painful memories of World War II) to the detriment of the topic of the economic crisis (which generates movements of migrants in search of better living conditions). The social valorization of war as a situation of extreme danger manifests and creates a more favourable environment for the image of individuals than a representation of economic problems would, as it is a more productive strategy in generating the *pathos* necessary for a movement of compassion and acceptance, which the various opinion texts aim at.

Throughout all of the analysed data, the referential expression used does not require specifications and, therefore, is always referred to as "the refugees" (with definite determinant) or just "refugees" (with zero determinant). In other words, given the contextual salience of the object, no author shows the need to specify that it is the refugees who arrive in Europe from the Middle East or Africa. In some cases, an adjective is added, as in the noun phrase "the Syrian refugees", establishing discrete and specific distinctions in the human multitude that the expression designates, but not without consequences in terms of the meanings of the discourse. Adjectives distinguish prototypical refugees and give them prominence in the ongoing drama.

Concerning the occurrence of the defined determinant or the zero determinant, two complementary explanations can be listed. On the one hand, the analysed texts are opinion articles, dialogical discourses that come into relation with other texts present in the same edition of the publication, which they evoke, reproduce, or comment on, and to which they move closer or further from, but to which they refer, in an anaphoric chain built in the physical space of the newspaper. The informative texts, first in the

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[9] It should be stressed that these designations have a higher visibility and consistency in the media discourse than those that the analysis of the opinion texts may suggest, since there are also numerous occurrences in articles belonging to other journalistic genres. As an example, it can be mentioned that, in the weekly *Expresso*, of the nine editions analyzed, six present the word "refugee" in the respective first pages and in the information articles of objectified enunciation (Moirand, 1999), there are 206 occurrences in body texts and 13 in titles.

[10] The word "migrant" is sometimes hyperonym, sometimes co-hyponym for "refugee", as in: "our look at the migratory flow has changed through the perception that it is, to a large extent, from Syria devastated by the Islamic state. Television images of the long march of migrants, first across the sea and then on land, mean that Europe's inhabitants have to take an individual position on whether or not they are against receiving these refugees" (*Publico*, 9/12/2015, p. 12).

newspaper's physical space, give rise to the relevance of categorizing the referent as "refugee", in relation to which coreference relations are established in opinion texts.

On the other hand, the opinion texts refer to a mediatic interdiscourse that circulates in the public sphere (Moirand 1999, 2006), even though it is occasionally not present in the same edition of the publication. Addressing the topic of refugees, at that time and in the national public space, dispensed additional clarifications on the object of discourse, such was the presence and capacity for social imposition of the evoked issue.

Categorization and quantification

The use of quantifiers[11] of superlative value also produces drama, a strategy aiming to attract the reader and keep their interest and surprise or thrill them. Often, events or states of things associated with refugees are thus modified through the use of quantifiers. These can be divided into two groups.

The first group contains the exact quantifications. These frequently occur in the opinion articles analysed, pointing to extreme situations, even though it is not easy for readers to have an accurate picture of what they mean.

One should note that, given the genre characteristics, opinion articles are not expected to use these strategies. On the contrary, informative articles would be more expected to present such quantifications. Opinion articles, which reflecting on the situation evoked in those, would emphasize other aspects. Nevertheless, the use of such procedures is frequent, which in fact creates drama, which runs through all the articles, due to the large numbers, as evidenced in the following examples:

> the UN estimates that *380 thousand people* have crossed the Mediterranean since January, of whom *three thousand* have died or disappeared. Two new fronts have opened in recent weeks: the Greek island of Lesbos, with *20,000 refugees* from the Turkish coast (equivalent to *a quarter of the local population*), and the Hungarian border with Serbia, where *20,000 people (half of whom* arrivals in the last three months) were taken over the weekend. (*Expresso*, 12/09/2015, p. 29)[12]

> Between *800,000 and 1.5 million refugees* are expected to arrive in Germany this year, pushing the German administrative mechanism to the limit. Just to integrate the children in school, for example, *about 25 thousand additional teachers* will be necessary, as estimated by associations mentioned by *The Economist*. (*Visão*, 29/10/2015, p. 29)

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[11] Moirand (2016, p. 1027) also identifies in the press discourse (French, in this case) "expressions of quantity" relevant to the configuration of the topic of migrants.

[12] In this example, as in the ones that follow, the italic is ours.

> Juncker proposes redistributing over *120,000 refugees* across the EU. (*Público*, 04/09/2015, p. 2)

The second group of quantifiers includes expressions that evoke approximate quantities. These expressions, categorizing (and recategorizing) the discourse object under construction, as well as the exact quantifications, are also at the service of the superlativization of the event, from the recurrent explanation of the quantity, extreme and overwhelming, perhaps even uncontrollable, in the perspective of the locutor/enunciator (S/E): *wave*, *flow*, *billow*, *tide*, *exodus*, *surge*, *explosion*, *millions of* are among the most salient, as the examples below illustrate:

> these *human surges* flee misery, hunger, to cherish the hope that they can continue to live. (*Público*, 14/09/2015, p. 47)

> Oblivious to these games of power are *millions of human beings* who struggle to survive and seek an exit from the stages of war, which they neither understand nor seek to understand. (*Público*, 04/09/2015, p. 53)

> Managing the *massive and unexpected flow of refugees* fleeing war and helping people who have lost everything is a huge challenge. (*Público*, 13/10/2015, p. 47)

> The alternatives would be the continuation of the shattered lives, death, destabilization of the region, *exodus* and the expansion of terror, barbarism and crimes against humanity and historical heritage. (*Visão*, 17/09/2015, p. 74)

> I refer to the *migratory explosion*, the corridors of human misfortune that rend the Mediterranean and combine hope and despair, trafficking and violence, shipwrecks and images of children walking along the railways. (*Visão*, 03/09/2015, p. 77)

> The last week made it possible to change the course of the discussion on *the wave of refugees and migrants* arriving in the European Union. (*Expresso*, 12/09/2015, p. 8)

> *The waves of refugees* knocking desperately at the doors of Europe, fleeing the war and barbarism installed in their countries of origin, are brutally challenging us. (*Expresso*, 19/09/2015, p. 35)

These expressions that quantify the objects of discourse in a superlative and metaphorical way do not trace euphoric scenarios. On the contrary, they collaborate in the creation of strongly dysphoric scenarios, in which they are aided by other referential

expressions that frame them, in the service of creating a dramatic, emotional and pathemic discourse ("corridors of human misfortune that rend the Mediterranean"; "at the doors of Europe").

As mentioned above, war is the social framework framing the migratory movement always referred to in the discourse by dysphoric expressions. Even without proceeding to an exact quantification of the occurrences, it is noticeable that, across the three publications, the expressions "refugee crisis" and "refugee drama" impose themselves. Not exhaustively, we list, below, from opinion articles extracted from *Público*, eight expressions that we can consider in relation to textual synonymy and respective occurrences:

1. "the tragedy of dozens of refugees" (six occurrences);
2. "the refugee crisis" (28 oc.);
3. "the refugee problem" (two oc);
4. "the refugee drama" (nine oc.);
5. "humanitarian chaos" (one oc.);
6. "refugee issue" (four oc.);
7. "human drama" (one oc.);
8. "Everyday tragedy" (one oc.).

In the case of *Expresso*, one can also point out as an example the use of other similar dysphoric expressions:

1. "hell" (five oc.);
2. "humanitarian tragedy"/"human tragedy" (two oc.).

Finally, in the case of *Visão*, the same outlook emerges:

1. "storm" (one oc.);
2. "barbarism" (one oc.);
3. "unspeakable drama" (one oc.).

In this way, modalization (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1980; Monte, 2011; Vion, 2005) is also marked by the enunciator, who finds a strategy of attractiveness for their text in dramatization, while building for themselves an image of a sensitive and human being.

As is characteristic of some media discourse, the metaphorization of the discursivized real is associated with the spectacularization of states of things, to shock, to attract the reader or to thrill.

The construction of the discursive object "the Europeans" – we
The construction of contrasting dichotomies: us and them

Media texts often operate a dichotomous treatment between *them*, the refugees, and *us* Europeans, drawing different profiles, actions and responsibilities for each other.

The issue of referencing refugees as *them*, as *different people* or *foreigners/strangers* is addressed in the newspapers. At various occasions, in more or less discrete modalization processes, opinion articles represent refugees on their escape route, the dangers

and risks they experience, the suffering they endure and their expectations and hopes. Criticisms are rarely made or frames constructed in which they assume negatively connoted roles. Whether intentionally or not, there is in this process of showing the *other* a dimension of humanization and, therefore, of affective approach, which is oriented towards defending reception of the refugees, marked in dysphoric linguistic-pragmatic processes of nominalization, adjectivation and metaphorization:

> they are not immigrants (or migrants as it is simpler to call them) since they do not choose to leave their countries, but rather displaced, *pushed by wars* that the West, in general, and Europe, by complete omission, have fuelled. (*Público*, 04/09/2015, p. 53)

> Political refugees from Syria, *fleeing horror and barbarism*, are more important than the Roman ruins of Palmira destroyed by the same monsters in human form (...). Going to the concrete, which is what interests those *disinherited from the land*, ... (*Expresso*, 05/09/2015, p. 7)

> Refugees are not like sardines. (...) Ana Macedo was uncomfortable that the refugees had also started to be treated as numbers. *With their destination drawn on Excel sheets.*

> What you hear most are discussions about quotas, it all comes down to quotas. Of sardines, of milk... of refugees. (*Visão*, 10/09/20156, p. 16)

There is a homogenization of the group in the preference for the designation of "refugees", unlike government entities, which insist on the distinction between refugees and migrants, with important perlocutory consequences.

In contrast, "the Europeans", the group in which the locutor is integrated and is therefore referred to as *us*, are configured on the other side of the barricade, or the border, or the wall, in a world of abundance and peace, attractive to the *others*. Despite the in-group function of the pronoun *we*, there is an explicit detachment, mediated by a negative evaluative judgment, from the various locutors/enunciators in relation to what they consider to be the existence of an atavistic or defensive attitude, when not hypocritical, which is not ethically acceptable:

> *our* security, *our* economy, *our* demography, *our* democracy, *our* culture are being challenged by *our* responses to this humanitarian crisis. (*Público*, 02/09/2015, p. 46)

> Aylan died dressed sweetly, in the semi-foetal position, in which we saw *our* children fall asleep reassured. And *we* all cried. (*Público*, 11/09/2015, p. 48)

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Today we *discuss*, and we *discuss*, and we *discuss*, and we again *discuss* the division of 120,000 refugees across the four corners of a *Europe that has become as rich as it is selfish and xenophobic*. (*Visão*, 01/10/2015, p. 46)

The construction of different "europes"

In fact, Europe is not configured as a uniform whole, as the reaction to the arrival of refugees is different in different countries. This was and still is a controversial issue, which divided and still divides Europe, or rather the European Union, for various reasons. The words *divide*, *division*, *divided*, associated with Europe, occur with some insistence throughout the corpus, as in the following examples:

the *European division* on refugees is seen in the thousands who have taken to the streets. (*Público*, 13/09/2015, p. 32)

Europeans, unable even to deal with the refugee crisis, are in danger of being *divided* if there is no American leadership. (*Público*, 02/10/2015, p. 29)

First, to restore unity and trust among member states. (...) Donald Tusk knows that *divisions* can jeopardize Schengen and compromise *European cooperation*. (*Visão*, 15/10/2015, p. 82)

Austria threatens to close another border of divided Europe

The EU is dangerously divided. There are more and more verbal walls and aggressions – in this scenario of solidary countries and hard countries, there is still no solution... (*Público*, 29/10/2015, p. 2)

The focus on the European division, repeatedly affirmed, highlights the creation of two geographical, but also civilizational, blocks:

that is to shatter Europe and give arguments to *countries like Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland* (...). Hungary, which has erected a barbed wire fence on its border with Serbia, threatens to use the army to keep refugees at bay. (*Visão*, 03/09/2015, p. 35)

The European Union is slowly *dividing into two blocs, Western Europe and Eastern Europe*. (...). Yes, the European Union is increasingly like the Roman Empire *divided* between western Rome and eastern Byzantium. And the curious thing is that the *dividing line* is in almost the same place. (*Expresso*, 19/09/2015, p. 35)

It is relevant to point out that the contrasts established are never neutral, but strongly marked by the evaluative modality (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 1980; Monte, 2011; Vion, 2005), which allows the position of each locutor-enunciator (L/E) to be clearly identified in relation to the question. The choice of words, and in particular adjectives, in expressions such as "the sinister spectacle"; "without all those abject things that are being done in Hungary"; "evoking the sinister days of Auschwitz" or "Europe is confronted with its worst ghosts" show a negative evaluative judgment that, regarding the division of Europe in relation to the reception of refugees, positions the S/E in divergence with this cruel, inhuman block. The tension created by the internal division is also assessed negatively by the S/E: "the EU is *dividing* dangerously". *Us* is, in fact, a group fractured by multiple differences.

Syntactic constructions at the service of contrast

The welcome and the rejection that characterize the different groups are also marked in syntactic structures of contrast (relations established by connectors *but*, *and*; syntactic parallelism) and in lexical structures linked by antonym relations, which we can see in the following table, with texts from *Público*.

We, the Europeans	They, the Europeans
German Chancellor reinforces call for Europe to *welcome* more refugees. France aligns with Germany, which *will accept* 800,000 asylum applications this year,	*but* countries like Hungary and Slovakia *reject* quota system. (*Público*, 01/09/2015, p. 1)
Merkel wants to maintain *openness to asylum*,	*but* the EU is divided and resists. (*Público*, 01/09/2015, p. 3)
Among Merkel's humanitarian appeals	*and* the *worrying signs of rejection and xenophobia*, Europe will have to decide. And to act. (*Público*, 01/09/2015, p. 44)
As declared solidarity,	side by side with *fear* (less stated), not of refugees, but of what could become uncontrollable in this torrent, starting with the *violence* of those who are *inciting hatred* and *xenophobia*. (*Público*, 04/09/2015, p. 50)
Cameron, Merkel and Hollande promise to give more asylum,	others turn their backs. (*Público*, 08/9, p. 4)
On the European Council's agenda they refer to "increasing cooperation with the Middle East",	*but* it will always be *insufficient*. (*Público*, 21/9, p. 44)

Table 5: Syntactic structures of contrast

These options of discursive organization intensify contrasts and build cohesive bonds that make reading easier, as they trigger the predictability of meanings. These

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are lines of reading that are relevantly integrated in the media interdiscourse that characterizes the articles under analysis and that sediment from text to text, influencing the discourse of the public sphere.

Portugal's role in the refugee crisis – the emergence of values

As the object of particular interest and the opinion expressed by the authors of the articles, Portugal, in some way, reflects the European situation. If the government and all institutions are in a position of solidarity, even if it is not always effective, situations, especially of an individual nature, that reflect feelings of xenophobia and fear[13] regarding refugees are nevertheless commented on and repudiated:

> Portugal is ready to *receive 3000 refugees*. (*Público*, 04/09/2015, p. 4)

> Portugal should take this opportunity to take a firm and clear political position: that it is a *supportive and humanist country* and, consequently, will actively collaborate in the required effort. (*Expresso*, 19/09/2015, p. 35)

> Let us *not let indifference* reach the level of the supermarket queue. (*Público*, 01/09/2015, p. 48)

> But beware, that the costs of *fear*, despair and destruction are incomparably higher, in addition to being *morally* and *politically* unacceptable. (*Visão*, 17/09/2015, p. 74)

The reactions (of an individual character, as mentioned above) of xenophobia, fear or inhumanity occur, above all, in the voice of those who are not recognized journalists or columnists, but "anonymous people" who find expression and media space in the "letters to the director", from the most radical to the most thoughtful.

These "Letters"/"Letters to the Director" occur, respectively, in the newspapers *Expresso* and *Público*.

Expresso gives voice, in its "Letters" section, to some opinions clearly opposed to the reception of refugees, who outline dysphoric future scenarios, or who express concerns about worrying scenarios:

> Germany has opened its arms and Hungary is preparing to close its borders. However, how will the peaceful absorption of so many people that continue to arrive every day be done? (...) If some are *white, Syrian, educated, some Christian, many others are Sub-Saharan, poor, uneducated, Muslim, terrorists perhaps.* (*Expresso*, 12/09/2015, p. 36)

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[13] The issue of fear in the face of refugees is dealt with stress in Moirand (2016).

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> Why don't you *clean up our home first?*

> I have kept silent about the *probable invasion* which Portugal will have to face, with refugees who have fled, especially from the Syrian Arab Republic (...). Portugal (...) *whose people are also going through enormous difficulties* and (...) which is by nature very kind, always very friendly and very hospitable to the outsiders with hands open wide, but only for others, because for *locals*, they only give us unemployment, tax increases... (*Expresso*, 26/09/2015, p. 36)

In *Público*, the existence of these attitudes is indirectly witnessed, in reports of other speeches, since all expressions of opinion evoke values and are favourable to the reception of refugees. These are opinions that are generally aligned with the official position of Portugal and the criticism focuses on dispersed, dissonant, but always collective and anonymous voices:

> today we see on social and other media, countless *selfish, xenophobic and racist manifestations* in relation to the unfortunate ones who are fleeing the *terror of the war* that is destroying their countries. Like Syria, Iraq, and Libya. And what is sad is to see *people who claim to be Christians* and always mentioning God take actions so contrary to the religion they profess. (*Público*, 17/09/2015, p. 44)

> It is inconceivable that *many of the Portuguese who speak out against the arrival of migrants and refugees to Europe*, are those who were *repatriated and that came back to Portugal after the 25th of April and the end of the colonial war*. They have already forgotten the suffering and the resident population discrimination when they were looked at askance, considered invaders and job-seekers. Another very pious species are those who say that "we must help our people first". (*Público*, 05/10/2015, p. 44)

One should note that, if the opinions expressed in the "letters to the director" belong to their authors, and not to the newspaper, it is no less true that it is the editorial board that chooses to give visibility and media space to some of them and not to others. Editorial responsibility exists, and it is up to the newspaper.

The relationship between *us/Europeans* and *they/refugees* is, as has already been shown, guided by ethical values, which support the ancient European culture. Pluralism, positively viewed, emphasizes the mutual benefits of opening up to other cultures, to other communities, advocating in favour of a process that they present, however, as demanding:

> *I do not want to be naive, nor to disguise the problems* that reception entails. But the question "what did you do for your brother?" is one of the most beautiful and oldest in our culture. (*Público*, 01/09/2015, p. 48)

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They bring with them their *culture, traditions and religion* because these qualities are part of them as they are part of us. (*Público*, 02/09/2015, p. 46)

The humanitarian emergency we are experiencing is, unfortunately, not new despite the proportions now felt by us, but the current wave of solidarity has the merit of facing it. *We cannot* let it fade. (...)

But it *is not enough to remedy* the present; *we must* also take care of the future. (...) Solutions have been ahead of everyone for too long. But the European Parliament *cannot* implement it alone. (...)

Parliament *will not shirk* its powers, and this time, too, the Council *will have* to act! (*Público*, 11/09/2015, p. 49)

We are experiencing the biggest refugee crisis since the Second World War and Europeans are rising to it. In the last few days the actions of many have reminded the world of *the solidarity and humanist spirit of the European peoples*. (*Público*, 11/09/2015, p. 49)

It is, of course, the European vision of refugees and the relationship that Europe wants/should establish with them. In a perspective of solidarity or rejection, which the division of Europe raises, Europeans are the agents and refugees/migrants are the object of this action. In syntactic-semantic terms, the subject's place is preferably occupied by *us*; the object place is preferably occupied by *them*. *They* only seem to be agents in a context of escape and experiencing pain, suffering, and risk. The verbs chosen are also decisive in building this relationship. *We*, divided Europe, *we* welcome, *we* harden ...; *they* leave, *they* run, *they* scream ...

We particularly find these structures in the titles:

Cameron *promises to welcome "a few thousand more" refugees*. (*Público*, 05/09/2015, p. 1)

Hungary *hardens* action *against refugees*. (*Público*, 05/09/2015, p. 2)

Civil society mobilizes to *support refugees*. (*Público*, 20/09/2015, p. 21)

Massive invasion of people *fleeing* war scenarios. (*Público*, 04/09/2015, p. 53)

Refugees *continue to enter* Hungary. (*Público*, 11/09/2015, p. 1)

Thousands *leave on foot from Budapest to Austria*. (*Público*, 05/09/2015, p. 2)

Portugal *welcomes*. (*Visão*, 17/09/2015, p. 54)

Conclusions

The media discourse was fundamental for the discursive construction of the social event led by the massive arrival of "human beings in transit", particularly in the period from September to October 2015.

In terms of the Portuguese newspaper discourse, information articles and opinion articles converge in this construction. It is a plurilocutor discursive event, in circulation in the Portuguese public space, but also throughout the European space. The discursive construction is structured around two groups, *us* and *them*.

In the referencing process carried out in the opinion articles, a process of categorization and recategorization stands out that points to the construction of a homogeneous group, *they*, *the others*, using different labels, but mostly the label "refugee". The choice of this word activates implicit meanings of a war scenario to the detriment of other scenarios, of an economic nature, in labels such as "(im)migrant".

In contrast to the mentioned homogeneity, the group formed by us, the Europeans, which the different locutors are part of, is fractured by dissent around values, marked in oppositional parallel structures.

The referencing options, which call for shared knowledge about the war, and the evaluative modalization frame the position of the locutors-enunciators, involved in the construction of public opinion and give the discourse a strong emotional aspect. This is in line with the position expressed by Moirand (2016, p. 1031), when the author states that

> the media treatment of events is indeed a privileged place for the recording of emotions. (…) This inscription, shown or suggested, plays a role in the names of events (…) but also in the discursive construction of events, in the lighting of the object of discourse and in the argumentation.

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