Crossing The Lines
How Digital Tech is Disrupting the Truth about Immigration

Dr Diego Rubio
Professor at IE University
Executive Director of IE’s Center for the Governance of Change
Justin Trudeau
@JustinTrudeau

To those fleeing persecution, terror & war, Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith. Diversity is our strength. #WelcomeToCanada

185,284 256,250
12:20 PM - 28 Jan 2017
Droves of African Migrants in Mexico Awaiting U.S. Asylum Under Secret Pact

SIX DISEASES RETURN TO US AS MIGRATION ADVOCATES CELEBRATE ‘WORLD REFUGEE DAY’

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION CONFIRMS: ILLEGAL ALIENS TO BEGIN COLLECTING BENEFITS IN 2017
The Old
There is an on-going Immigrant Invasion

Myth I

“... and, as they have so many children and so many come from across the sea, the day will soon come when they (the Muslims) will be more than us (the Christians) and there will only be mosques in our land”.

Spanish Christian Author, 1572
There is an on-going Immigrant Invasion

Myth I

Translation:

In 2065 quota immigrants in Italy could exceed 40% of the total population.

Source: Sputnik News, 2017
Cultural Overtake by Islam or foreign customs

Myth II

Macron says Notre Dame should be rebuilt in line with diversity; architect suggests an Islamic minaret be included

APR 25, 2019 4:43 PM BY CHRISTINE DOUGLASS-WILLIAMS
Immigrants are violent and dangerous

Myth III

According to Rapefugees.net
Refugees committed 445 sex crimes in Germany, 2016

According to Official Data
Source: Der Spiegel, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never Happened</th>
<th>Refugees</th>
<th>Germans, incl. EU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>154</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>45 22 129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Immigrants are violent and dangerous

Myth III

“When Mexico sends its people, they’re not sending their best. They’re not sending you. They’re not sending you. They’re sending people that have lots of problems, and they’re bringing those problems with us. They’re bringing drugs. They’re bringing crime. They’re rapists. And some, I assume, are good people.”

Donald Trump, June 16, 2015
Immigrants live on Benefits

Myth IV

Translation:
THE SPAIN OF THE SOCIALISTS & PODEMOS

Jorge: Spanish, Spanish, 93 years old. Has worked all his life. Evicted from his house by the state. It has taken a year to find a public shelter.

Mohamed, Nigerian, 20 years old. Two (years) in Spain where he has not worked, neither during day nor night. The state has given him shelter these two years, a mobile phone and 30€ a day.
The New
1. Misinforming is now faster, easier & cheaper than ever before
9% - 15% of all current accounts on Twitter are automated

30 - 50 m million bots active on the platform

The distorted debate on Immigration

Italy, 2017/18 Twitter

Pro-Immigration Community

42,495 users
(53% of the total)

219,187 tweets
(27% of the total)

Anti-Immigration Community

25,325 users
(32% of the total)

562,168 tweets
(68% of the total)

Source: Alto, 2018
The distorted debate on Immigration

Italy, 2017/18 Twitter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pro-Immigration Community</th>
<th>Anti-Immigration Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53% Users</td>
<td>68% Tweets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27% Tweets</td>
<td>32% Users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS</td>
<td>2.5x more active</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. There are new, small, non-state actors involved
In the game of disinformation

III. Lies about Immigrants are being weaponized

To weaken the European Union and the West
IV. Misinformation resonates in Eco-Chambers
And that is polarizing the Immigration Debate
IV. Misinformation resonates in Eco-Chambers

The Immigration debate in Germany

Main Anti-Immigration and Anti-Islam websites in Germany and their visitors

- journalistenwatch.com (99%, Affinity to AfD)
- bild.de (89%, Affinity to AfD)
- jungefreiheit.de (98%, Affinity to AfD)
- tichyseinblick.de (93%, Affinity to AfD)
- epochtimes.de (97%, Affinity to AfD)
- philosophia-perennis.com (99%, Affinity to AfD)
- pi-news.net (99%, Affinity to AfD)
- ffd365.de (100%, Affinity to AfD)
- afbundestag.de (99%, Affinity to AfD)
- anonymousnews.ru (98%, Affinity to AfD)
Digital Misinformation is **NOT** behind the increase in Anti-Immigration feelings

But it is causing a **polarization** of the debate
Solutions?
Fact-Checking
The Limitations of Fact-Checking

Two main points

- Impossibility to fact-check every single digital content
- Impossibility to fact-check every single digital content

Correction (providing the accurate facts) does not necessarily lead to a change of opinion.

people use political figures as a heuristic to guide evaluation of what is true or false.

Swire B, Berinsky AJ, Lewandowsky S, Ecker UKH. 2017 ‘Processing political misinformation: comprehending the Trump phenomenon’. R. Soc. open sci. 4
Lack of Trust in the Gatekeepers

% of Americans who have a great deal/fair amount of trust in mass media
Lack of Trust in the Gatekeepers

% of Europeans who trust their political institutions
Lack of Trust is fuelling the spread of Misinformation

On Immigration issues, UK

Brits who think that
The Government is deliberately hiding the truth about how many immigrants really live in the country

Brits who think that
Immigration to the UK is part of a bigger plan to make Muslims a majority of the country’s population

Source: University of Cambridge and YouGov, 2018
Lack of Trust is fuelling the spread of Misinformation

On Immigration issues, US

Americans who think that
The Government is deliberately hiding the truth about how many immigrants really live in the country

- Trump voters: 44
- Clinton voters: 12

Americans who think that
Immigration to the UK is part of a bigger plan to make Muslims a majority of the country’s population

- Trump voters: 41
- Clinton voters: 3

Source: University of Cambridge and YouGov, 2018
Inclination to believe in conspiracy theories

Lack of Trust in Governments

Tendency to believe fake news about immigration
‘Truthfulness is a form of truthworthiness.’

Bernard Williams, 2002
Thanks!
Stay in touch: diego.rubio@ie.edu