

Background

Amadeu Antonio Stiftung explains toxic narratives as a form of “toxic communication” describing it as a “*linguistic behavior that has a negative influence on its environment* “. Toxic narratives are then described with the words: “*When we speak of toxic narratives, we are referring to accounts of the world that supply the pertinent “events” and interpretations for such communication.*” This type of communication and events (strikes, protests etc.) can be used in any topic and background. The main goal is to provoke a aggression against any social group or changes and manipulate opinions of societies or individuals, regardless the fact, that used sources of the promoters and followers are usually unprofessional and their quality is questionable. Just like populism, which appears in e.g. election campaigns or as an ideology of political parties, toxic narratives are based on evoking mistrust of societies in national or international topics people are not well informed about. They create an uncomfortable, unsure and fearful ambience. Occurrence of toxic narratives expanse with the continuous use of technology, medias and social networks, which are becoming its venue for propaganda and sharing false information. The impulse for creation of toxic narratives can be initiated by any person and in various forms – from hate speeches to fake news, public strikes or sessions, focusing on people’s instinct to automatically feel endangered. All these aspects support penetration of toxic narratives’ impact into society, causing social instability and possible future collapse.

The European migrant crisis in 2015 was one of the main triggers for xenophobic and negative reactions, which then became a big topic. International medias frequently promoted the migrant crisis. The last decade was the main period of starting conflicts in South Sudan, Syria, Somalia, Afghanistan, Myanmar etc., causing a massive migration of refugees. Intense promotion of the migrant crisis was a big impulse for extremism and hate against Islam and foreign nationalities. Political parties use this form of fear and hate to seize power by intense propagation in forms of slogans, public debates, opposing demonstration etc. Because of their references to this topic and standing for the popular opinion of the society their popularity highly increases. For example, the increase of the number of votes in elections for the German extremist political party AfD – *Alternative für Deutschland* (translated as Alternative for Germany). In parliament elections in 2014 got the political party 4,7% of the vote, but in the following federal elections in 2016, standing against decisions of the pro-migration chancellor Angel Merkel it received 15% of the vote and in 2017 parliament elections got 12,6% of the vote, becoming the third strongest political party in Germany.

Countries accepting the highest percentages of refugees or being the entrance states to Europe for refugees from Africa or the Middle East are the most affected ones.

UN involvement

On 13 July 2018 UN member states finalized the text for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration with a goal to provide protection of refugees' rights and to counter the present toxic narratives violating the human rights in all dimension of the migration. The conference for its adoption was held in Marrakesh 10th of December 2018 and the pact was adopted by 152 members of the UN - Czech Republic, Hungary, Israel, Poland, and the United States of America were the countries voting against.

Louise Arbor, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for International Migration and the secretary general of the conference in Marrakesh describes the purpose of the Global Compact with words: *"The Global Compact was developed as an initiative of members states as government felt to compelled to respond to the increasingly need to ensure that the global migration is better managed."* And with words: *"Each state experiences the migration differently and as the compact was state initiative, therefor its implementation will rest primarily with states particularly in matters that required national actions..."* resulting in a fact, that UN does have an important role in putting forward the convention, but the final decision lays only on the states' governments. Louise Arbor is pointing out the fact, that people fear the refugees' mobility because of the impact of toxic narratives, which are neglecting the possible use of migration in a favor of the state and it's benefits. Toxic narratives and political parties using toxic narratives are because of their opposing opinions turning migration into violative and dangerous thing. Louise Arbour is also pointing out the fact, that toxic narratives will impact the Global Compact. *"Many challenges will stay in the way of implementation, not least, the toxic narratives that often persist when it comes to migrant."*

Possible solutions

1. Create an international organization against mistrust and disinformation about migration
2. Countering the expanse of false information
 - a. Countering the spreading of fake news and information on social medias

- b. Provide public lectures to acquaint citizens about the true side of the migrant crisis
 - c. Provide trustful, available and affordable sources for citizens
3. Concentrate on the most affected regions and provide support to the regions with the highest percentage of votes for anti-Islam and extremist political parties
4. Provide free media literacy for citizens

Questions to consider

- What is the recent situation of your state in accepting refugees and migrants?
- How does your state counters the toxic narratives and anti-refugees propaganda?
- Is your state aware of the toxic narratives and what is it's opinion?
- Is your state a signatory of the Global Compact for Migration?

Used sources

The Migrant Crisis

<https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/statistics/>

<https://www.unhcr.org/5d08d7ee7.pdf>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/19/world/five-conflicts-driving-refugees.html>

Toxic narratives

<https://www.insightswb.com/storytelling-to-counter-toxic-narratives/>

https://www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/toxic_narratives.pdf

The Global Compact for Migration

<https://spainsnews.com/the-migrant-pact-seeks-to-eliminate-toxic-narratives-and-disinformation/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Gj2BdN1xxo>

