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Islamophobic hate speech on social networks. An analysis of attitudes to Islamophobia on Twitter

El discurso de odio islamófobo en las redes sociales. Un análisis de las actitudes ante la islamofobia en Twitter

Abstract

This research aims to study Islamophobic hate speech in Spain by analysing messages on the Twitter social network. The manner in which we currently communicate has shifted towards digital communication, which provides scope for disinformation and fake news. Moreover, all this feeds back into the post-truth communicative approach, where emotions take precedence over verified facts. Migration and, specifically, Islamophobia, have increased due to specific events, such as jihadist attacks in Europe, and by other more systemic events, such as unaccompanied migrant children and adolescents on social networks. The methodology followed here is a content analysis through Twitter messages from 2012 to 2021. More than 7,000 tweets referring to Islamophobic hashtags were analysed and coded -intercoded- considering the variables related to the subject. Subsequently, a univariate, bivariate and multivariate statistical analysis was performed. The results show the existence of an Islamophobic hate discourse in Spain, differentiated into different Islamophobic positions. Discussion: There are three profiles in Spanish society in relation to Islamophobia: the ambivalent, the non-Islamophobic and the Islamophobic. The main conclusions show the existence of a hate discourse centred on Islamophobia, in which three profiles of attitudes towards Islamophobia are differentiated: favourable, opposed, and ambivalent.

Resumen

El objetivo de esta investigación es estudiar el discurso de odio por islamofobia en España mediante el análisis de los mensajes de la red social Twitter. En la actualidad, la forma de comunicarnos ha girado hacia una comunicación digital en la que tienen cabida la desinformación y las fake news. Además, todo esto se retroalimenta del enfoque comunicativo de la posverdad donde priman las emociones por encima de los hechos contrastados. La migración y, concretamente, la islamofobia se ve incrementada por acontecimientos puntuales como atentados yihadistas en Europa, y por otros más sistémicos como los niños, niñas y adolescentes migrantes no acompañados en redes sociales. La metodología que se ha seguido en esta investigación es el análisis de contenido por medio de los mensajes de Twitter desde 2012 hasta 2021. Se han analizado más de 7.000 tuits que hacían referencia a hashtag islamófobos, y se han codificado -intercode- teniendo en cuenta las variables relacionadas con la temática. Posteriormente, se ha hecho un análisis estadístico univariante, bivariante y multivariante. Los resultados de la investigación muestran la existencia de un discurso de odio islamófobo en España diferencia en distintas posturas de islamofobia. Discusión: Existen tres perfiles en la sociedad española en relación con la islamofobia, estos son los ambivalentes, los no islamófobos y los islamófobos. Las principales conclusiones de esta investigación muestran la existencia de un discurso de odio centrado en la islamofobia; en el que se diferencian tres perfiles de actitudes ante la islamofobia: favorables, contrarios y ambivalentes.

Keywords
Islamophobia; Twitter; social networks; hate speech; communication; migration; Spain.

Palabras clave
Islamofobia; Twitter; redes sociales; discurso de odio; comunicación; migración; España.

1. Introduction

The post-truth or the so-called fluid information era (Bauman, 2013; Del Fresno, 2019) has been influenced by the way in which society tends to communicate and perceive information. Contemporary society is ever more polarised around topics which in previous decades were not so ambiguous. Few would question supporting human rights at the start of the 2000´s decade. Whatever ideology people had, there was a tacit consensus on supporting them. On example of this was the Organic Law of 4/2000 on the rights and freedoms of foreigners in Spain and their social integration. That is, the so-called foreign nationals law was considered to be one of the most progressive ones in Europe on migration and dates back to 2000 (Relaño, 2004).

That is not to say there has been any rights and freedoms in Spain have been withdrawn. Actually, the situation has changed because the social desirability factor has been altered by the political legitimisation of xenophobic, racist, climate-change denier and sexist discourse (Chomsky, 2018). Specifically, the most polarised topics in contemporary society are gender, migration and the environment, especially climate change (Fuentes-Lara, 2021). The social networks have been conducive to this process. This is because hiding one´s identity (which is akin to anonymity) on the social networks, as well as the delegitimisation of traditional media driven by certain political parties has helped spread hate speech (Elías, 2018).

Hate speech is understood to be:

> any means of verbal or written communication, or behaviour in which a person or group is attacked in terms of their religion, ethnic origin, nationality, race, colour, ancestry, gender or any other identifying factor (ONU, 2019: 3).

This is one of the main threats to peaceful coexistance in our society. especially when various polarising elements are at play which are: cultural identity, gender, aporophobia, migration and democratic values. For this reason, Islamaphobia is one of the main reservoirs of hate speech in our society.

The aim of this research is to analyse Islamaphobia-related hate speech in Spain. This was carried out by a study on the social network, Twitter, since it is the favourite one in Spain for expressing political opinions and attitudes (López-Meri and Casero-Ripollés, 2016). It must be added that Twitter, with 400 million active users, broadcasts over 500 million short messages per day which has a strong effect on part of society (Sayce, 2020). The importance of analysing Twitter also lies in the influence it has on the general public by nurturing "the radicalisation of their beliefs even more and the rejection of people outside their cultural, social and economic milieu" (Arcila-Calderón et al., 2022). On the basis of the methodology used in this article the attitudes and opinions about immigration are particularly remarkable, hence, the research question posed: is there Islamaphobia-based hate speech in Spain?

2. Theoretical context

2.1. New Communicative paradigm

In recent years, sociologists, journalists, academics in the field of social sciences and activists (Vosoughi, Roy and Aral, 2018; porCausa, 2019; More in Common, 2019; Velasco and Rodríguez-Alarcón, 2020; etc.) have been championing a new communicative paradigm. The changeover from analogue to digital has entailed changing the way in which society communicates. This was especially marked from the time in which the Internet spread to homes in Europe and with the rise of the so-called digital communication revolution (Del Fresno and Manfredi, 2018). With the Internet 2.0 we took a step further. Although the Internet enabled access to large amounts of information and contents, it was blogs which turned Internet users into potential creators of information and opinion (Carrasco-Campos, 2019).

From the Web 2.0 from 2002 onwards social networks emerged as the descendants of blogs. Velasco and Rodríguez-Alarcón (2020) state that one does not need to focus on social networks as the driving force behind this communicative paradigm, but on the effect smartphones have had on communication. The combination of social networks as applications on smartphones turned users into both recipients and disseminators of information and contents in real time. In this way, the narrative scenario has become entirely digital and is constantly retransmitted live (Carrasco-Campos, 2019). The main social networks (in terms of the number of users and media influence) first appeared in 2004 with Facebook and then in 2006 with Twitter. Later, Smartphones came into general use from 2010 onwards (porCausa, 2019). 2016 marks the start of this new communicative paradigm based on: a) the digital framework of communication in which traditional media has been delegitimised (Amorós García, 2019; Rúas Araújo, Mazaira and Rodríguez, 2018), b) disinformation in which it is more important for news to go viral than whether it is true or not (Fuentes-Lara, 2021), c) the narrative framework where hate speech has been incorporated into public discourse (Velasco and Rodríguez-Alarcón, 2020) and d) the securitisation discourse in which fear of others is stoked and which began after the 11th September terrorist attacks (porCausa, 2019).

In 2016 journalists and scientific articles began popularising the concepts of post-truth, disinformation and fake news. These terms were interconnected, and were occasionally used interchangeably. The former refers to "circumstances in which objective facts have less influence on shaping public opinion than appealing to emotion and personal beliefs" (Oxford University Press, 2016). According to Del Fresno (2019) post-truth focuses on the subordination and reorganisation of facts in line with a political leaning and ideology. This results in a neologism in which if emotions and feelings are real, then the facts which trigger them must also be real. That is, what one feels is true must be true (Del Fresno and Manfredi, 2018). Moreover, disinformation is "any false informative content which has been deliberately created and spread" (Vosoughi, Roy and Aral, 2018: 76). Within disinformation or information disorder lies fake news, bad information and unverified news (Del Fresno, 2019).

One of the contributing factors to the impact fake news has had at present, more than in any other period, is the rise of social networks. The social platforms have been used not only to create but also to spread fake news or disinformation to audiences with polarised ideologies (Moreno et al., 2019). The social networks, especially Twitter, using sophisticated techniques such as geo-labelling and micro-segmentation strategies have gained access to potential audiences rendering them particularly vulnerable to this type of news (Arcila-Calderón et al., 2022).

2.2. Hate speech in the anti-immigration narrative

Disinformation helps hate speech spread in public discourse. From social institutions such as Fundación porCausa (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021) and More in Common (2019, 2022) it can be seen that hate speech cannot be countered, so the narrative must be replaced, or the narrative framework changed.

The campaign by Donald Trump for the 2016 presidential elections marked the start of those influenced by fake news and especially by topics sensitive to them. In fact, it can be said that there are popular themes for fake news due to politically polarised issues such as gender, the environment and especially immigration (Juárez-Torres, 2020; Schäfer and Schadauer, 2019). Solely based on immigration and Donald Trump, the immigration-related theme concerned building a wall on the border between Mexico and the United States to " slow down" illegal immigration. Moreover, it was claimed that Mexico would also pay for it (Juárez-Torres, 2020). This news and its polarisation by giving incorrect figures on the number of Mexican immigrants and how much they cost the economy were focal points of this electoral campaign (Caramelo Pérez, 2020).

The United States was not the only place where this happened. The 2016 Brexit campaign was another clear case when immigration was weaponised. With Brexit, fake news about the closure of "native" establishments due to an "invasion" from immigrant traders were linked to a loss of British cultural identity (Bravo Martos, 2020) and in which false data about what the migrant community and the European Union cost the British people (Dennison and Geddes, 2018). Jair Bolsonaro in the 2018 presidential campaign in Brazil used a political communication strategy identical to that of Donald Trump. That is, he discredited the traditional media, polarised topics the public were sensitive to, criticised traditional political parties and his campaign was strongly influenced by the fake news disseminated on social media (Gualda, 2021).

On the basis of this context and especially due to the Bolsonaro campaign, Mexicans used a website called "Verificado" (verified) whose mission was to refute hoaxes and fake news during the elections for the Mexican president in 2018 (Calderón Zambrano, 2020). However, fact-checking websites were not seen as useful for countering disinformation, since once the hoaxes were on the social networks, refuting them had limited effect (Pérez-Curiel and Velasco-Molpeceres, 2020). In Spain, fake news, fake profiles and hoaxes were especially effective in the "referéndum" on 1st October 2018 in Catalonia (Pérez-Curiel and Velasco-Molpeceres, 2020).

2.3. The anti-immigration narrative

The framing approach entails having a narrative framework. To be specific, the narrative context on immigration in the last two decades has been built on anti-immigration especially in Europe. Although there is a xenophobic discourse which is on the rise in Europe, it is essential to explore how those on social topics were created, especially in the case of immigration as a social problem (Arcila-Calderón et al., 2022).

The anti-immigration narrative has been built up by spreading political and social discourse which hinge on five points. Firstly, the aim of the securitisation discourse is to stoke fear about immigration by providing data, that may be untrue, about delinquency, lack of public safety and gender-based violence, which gives rise to *crimmigation* (Müller and Schwarz, 2021). In fact, it is ironic that the more security is tightened, the more illegal routes of entry open up, the more chaos there is and the more panic there is about immigration and the stronger the criminalizing discourse on migrants becomes (Anderson, 2020).

Secondly, nationalism or modern national-populism (Portes, 2021) which focuses on a narrative about immigrants stealing jobs, who take advantage of benefits and abuse public services, especially health. The nationalist discourse is based on identity rhetoric. In other words, that multiculturalism and cultural diversity destroy national identity (Vertovec, 2022).

Thirdly, foreigners are rejected. To be specific, a narrative is created which focuses on a sector of the migrant population. The discourse is stoked by tarring all migrant people with the same brush under the premise of Islamaphobia, aprophobia and the crimmigation derived from illegal immigration (Rosenberg Rubins, 2022, Taras, 2012). In this way, in the narrative migrants are identified as Muslims, with a low socio-economic level and a penchant for delinquency (Cortina, 2017).

In fourth place is human mobility. The fact that human mobility has existed throughout history is glossed over and is interpreted as a failure of the countries of origin of the migrant people. This is because their own economic and political systems have failed to prevent emigration (Lacomba, 2008).

Lastly, comes electioneering. Economic and national protectionism are instruments used in elections for regaining sovereignty and control over the state (Hermele, 2021).

This anti-immigration narrative is spread by different channels and using tools. Firstly, disinformation is spread rapidly on social networks and by social bots or fake profiles (Del Fresno, 2019) and this may go from false information to telling half-truths or by expanding unpopular stances (Ruiz Aravena, 2019). Secondly, a disruptive narrative is used which exceeds the boundaries of what is deemed to be " politically correct" and sometimes becomes hate speech. One example of this is the anti-European narrative which hinges on the idea that globalization and social integration pushed by the European Union undermines European identity. This is especially paradoxical since in articles 79 and 80 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFUE), it sets out that the European Union strives to create an integrated European policy, based on solidarity and globalisation (Kogovsek Šalamon, 2017; Bast, 2018).

The report "Anti-immigration Franchise" created by porCausa in 2019 identified over 20 political groups with parliamentary seats that had an anti-immigration stance, whether these were in national parliaments and/or in the European Parliament, and came from around twenty EU countries. This trend began in 2014 with the entrance of the Five Star Movement (M5E) into the European Union. This movement clashed with one of the objectives of the union, which is to obtain a global policy on immigration and whose outlook on the future is based on solidarity (Kogovsek Šalamon, 2017). The European Parliament itself indicated that the aim of its immigration policy was to establish a balanced approach to legal and illegal immigration (Bast, 2018). This is something that parties with an anti-immigration stance not only reject, but take the opposite view in the parliament itself. (porCausa, 2019).

2.4. Anti-immigration attitudes in the new communicative paradigm

Cea D'Ancona (2009) determined three profiles for attitudes to immigration in Spanish society which are those reticent to migration, ambivalent and tolerant. In Spain, most people hold the latter view. Moreover, this percentage has remained very constant throughout the longitudinal study on migration. Velasco and Rodríguez-Alarcón (2020) further explored these three audience profiles on attitudes to immigration, which was similar to those proposed by Cea D'Ancona (2009). They distinguished between a) *lovers* or voters who do not question human rights and accept immigration as one of these; b) *haters* and opposers who are those who will never accept that migration is a human right, regardless of the circumstances they are in; and c) undecided or ambivalent, are those who swing between stances close to *lovers* and *haters* according to events or social and personal circumstances. Ambivalent people believe in human rights, but put their own ones above those of others. As indicated by Velasco and Rodríguez-Alarcón (2020) they are *lovers* if they see the emotive photo of Aylan Kurdi and *haters* when a jihad terrorist attack occurs. The classification by Velasco and Rodríguez-Alarcón (2020) is that which will be used in this research, but using the terms favourable, ambivalent and against.

The ambivalent group is that which has most grown in the last five-year period. Research from Fundación porCausa (2020), using the CIS barometers, indicate that although in 2016 between 33%-40% of people had an ambivalent attitude to immigration, in 2020 this figure grew to over 60%. This data concurs with a European trend showing a growth in ambivalent attitudes and a fall in the number of those in favour of immigration (More in Common, 2019).

Audiences for the immigration narrative in the new communicative paradigm have not split between those in favour and against, as predicted, but the emergence of disinformation and post-truth has meant society has adopted very volatile ambivalent stances on this issue. Added to this is the anti-immigration narrative given by political parties which has led to "thought contamination and the establishment of an anti-immigration common sense which has arisen in record time mainly in our country" (Velasco and Rodríguez-Alarcón, 2020: 17).

Islamaphobia not only contains the elements of its anti-immigration narrative, but is also reinforced by matters such as: a) gender: use of the hijab and Muslim culture; b) equating Muslims with terrorists; and c) "cultural differences" which undermine democratic, western values.

3. Methodology

3.1. Methodological design

The study of the opinions and attitudes on immigration has traditionally been undertaken with a data production technique from polling. Rinken (2015) states that attitudes and opinions can only be measured indirectly by asking individuals to express their stance given different facts and behaviour. In this way, polling is carried out on the basis of "sincerity, information and the ability to be introspective, willingness to provide information, how respondents interpret the questions etc…" (Gimeno, 2001: 77). However, social networks and their data analysis have changed their positions in so far as attitudes cannot be measured directly as these have arisen inside people´s minds (Cinelli et al., 2021).

Although polling was and still is the preferred method for measuring attitudes to immigration, since 1995 Izquierdo indicated there has been an important bias since:

> Some people have fewer educational and financial resources, and some are over age and lack resources. If this is entirely true, then racism would be living on borrowed time in developed societies and its social bases would be in full retreat (Izquierdo, 1995: 65).

Therefore, Izquierdo (1995) indicated that the middle class in society responded to polls according to social desireability as they were more interested in not coming across as racist and/or xenophobic (Larson, 2019) because it is not socially acceptable nor politically correct (Gallacher, Heerdink and Hewstone, 2021).

At present, parties with an anti-immigration narrative have led society to perceive that having racist and/or xenophobic attitudes is something acceptable since they have already been incorporated into public discourse, and they are one of the main sources of social polarisation (Cinelli et al., 2021). This is more marked when these speeches are shared annoymously on social networks, especially Twitter, using disinformation techniques and post-truth tools (Ekman, 2019). Twitter is considered to be one tool for directly analysing the attitudes and opinions of Spanish society to immigration (Felt, 2016), specifically, when this research is on Islamaphobia.

Apart from this, Twitter has a proven track record in tracing online racism (Chaudhry, 2015; Gualda, 2021). Moreover, other factors for this network which make it very useful for monitoring it and analysing the content and opinions users have been the ease at which its contents can go viral and the speed at which communication takes place (Arcila Calderón, Blanco Herrero and Valdez Apolo, 2020).

3.2. Methodology

In this research a quantitative method was followed in which the data production technique consisted in downloading messages or tweets on Twitter. A data analysis was performed consisting in a univariate statistical data analysis (frequency distribution), bivariate (correlations) and multivariate (segmentation tree). An Application Programming Interface (API) from Twitter was used for data production. Its Academic Research version was used with which a historial of tweets could be downloaded for any period without any time limit (Arcila Calderón, Blanco Herrero and Valdez Apolo, 2020). The API from Twitter was connected to Google Colaboratory which could be executed and programmed on Python. The API Academic Research downloaded all the tweets posted regardless of where they were sent from, and the language chosen. In this research, Spain was used as a filter for location and the official languages in Spain were permitted. Regarding the latter, JSON language was used which was that marked in the tweets.

In May 2021 over 7,000 tweets were downloaded which included the key words in the research for a determined time filter (see table 1). In this study a final sample of 2,205 tweets were chosen once repeated ones had been deleted as well as those which used the key words but in other contexts and those which were not logical but whose meaning depended on a hyperlink or attached images (Arcila Calderón, Blanco Herrero and Valdez Apolo, 2020).

Table 1. Key words and tweeting period

Key words	Context
#MENAS #Islam #StopIslamizacion #StopIslam #FueraMenas	2019 elections - Rise in number of immigrants in the Canary Islands summer 2020 - Catalan elections 14F 2021 – Elections in the community of Madrid 4th May 2021
#NoHijab #NoHiyab #NoHijabDay #WordlHijabDay	From 2017 to February 2021
#Machismo (male chauvinism) #Islam	From 2016 until the present day
#PutosMoros (f**king Moors)	Period between 2012-2014
#Árabe #Terrorista	From 2012 until the present day
#VivaEspaña «moros» (Long live Spain "moors")	Elections on 4th May in the community of Madrid
#InvasiónÁrabe	From 2012 until the present day
#FueraIslam (Islam out)	From 2015 until the present day
#NoAlVelo (No to the veil)	From 2015 until the present day
#NoNosTaparán (They won´t cover us)	From 2012 until the present day
#VeloIslámico (islamic veil)	From 2012 until the present day

Source: Produced by the author

This first filter was made with the programme, Doccano, which is a tool for making notes in open source text, in which three filtering labels were set for the Islamaphobic hate speech variable: no hate, hate and ruled out. For the end sample, the tweets no hate and hate were used out of which 46.3% were messages with no connection to hate speech and 53.7% were tweets which either contained or stoked hate speech.

Table 2. Classification of tweets for no hate and hate

	Frequency	Percentage
No hate	1,020	46.3%
Hate	1,185	53.7%
Total	2,205	100.0%

Source: Produced by the author

3.3. Data analysis technique

The data analysis technique was carried out by a manual contents analysis in which four measurements were taken to classify the tweets.

• Islamaphobia. This was the main category in this research. This variable was encoded with three variables: a) active Islamaphobia linked to hate speech; and that related to openly Islamaphobic tweets; b) passive Islamaphobia concerned messages that despite not containing explicit Islamaphobia implied their meaning was Islamaphobic; c) non-Islamaphobic were tweets which defended Islam, were neutral or covered news about Islam without any Islamaphobic contents.

• Motives behind Islamaphobia. To measure both active and passive Islamaphobia the categories from Grosfoguel (2012) were used to quantify to what extent Muslim people were rejected, apart from the delinquency category which comes from Taras (2012).

- Gender: tweets which covered ideas about the living conditions and the freedoms Muslim women had; when the Islamic veil was mentioned as a symbol of suppression or repression against women, or banning the hijab in public in Spain.

- Terrorism: the identification of Muslims as terrorists who have jihad ideas; identification of all Muslim people and/or Arabs as potential terrorists with phrases such as "all the same". This relationship was used to justify their expulsion from Spain and Europe with comments such as "fuera moros"(Muslims out) "a su puto pais"(Go back to your f*cking country").

- Religion: view of Muslim religion as inferior; claimed to be supporting freedom; incompatible with democratic values and incited violence (terrorism). When the Islamic religion was compared to terrorism and identified as the cause of terrorist attacks in Europe, Mohammed was referred to constantly as well as Sharia law, and claims they would impose themselves on Spain and Europe unless we defended ourselves against Islam.

- Epistemology: the belief that Islamic knowledge and culture was inferior (maurophobia or hatred of Moors and Moorish culture); when phrases such as "follacabras"/goat f**ker" were used to refer to Muslim people. The same occurred with fear, a characteristic feature of the new communicative paradigm, where there was backlash against it. For example, the phrase "we are not afraid" was a kind of military discourse, implying we were at war.

- Delinquency: when violence and delinquency were linked to Muslim people as something intrinsic to Islamic culture. This category, especially, was used in connection with migrant children and teenagers.

Before encoding manually, the encoders were trained in order to standardize the criteria uniformly. Likewise, this way all measurements could be understood in a similar fashion (Vrysis et al., 2021).

In order to ensure the measurements taken were reliable an inter-encoding test was performed. To do so, another person encoded the main research category: the existence of Islamophobic hate speech. This one was the most fluid and a reliability analysis was pertinent at this point since all subsequent measurements were derived from it (Arcila-Calderón et al., 2022). The reliability test was made with a random sample of 700 messages or 10% of the total sample. The Kappa de Cohen statistics displayed a value of 0.8 which showed suitable reliability since 0.7 and above was deemed to be reliable enough.

Table 3. Reliability of main measurement

Variable	Kappa de Cohen
Islamaphobic hate speech	0.784

Source: Produced by the author

The quantitative methodology used was summarised with the systematic and longitudinal download of the tweets. In order to choose key words for creating the download and for making the variables the bibliography review was used. Once the final corpus of tweets was created, they were encoded and intercode was used to test whether it was subjective. This was ruled out by the Kappa de Cohen test. From then onwards, a statistical analysis was made with the SPSS programme which yielded the results shown in the next section. The aim of this methodology was to respond to the research question thereby reducing the social-desirability bias (Larson, 2019).

4. Results

The categories for hate and no hate were encoded again in three analysis measurements. The no hate category corresponded to non-Islamaphobic. That is, these messages did not contain any Islamaphobic information. 46.3% of tweets were not Islamaphobic, although they contained the key words used in this research. For this reason, some of the tweets in this measurement corresponded to news on Islam, on defending Islam or the Muslim community, or were neutral in terms of Islam. As for the hate category, this was classified into two measurements: active Islamaphobia and passive Islamaphobia.

Active Islamaphobia contained tweet from implicit hate speech, and accounted for 21.1% of the messages analysed. Active Islamaphobia included references to expelling Muslims, killing them or murdering them, death threats and *hashtags* such as #PutosMoros, #FueraIslam, #FueraMenas, #StopIslamizacion and #StopIslam. Passive Islamaphobia referred to messages which despite not being hate speech in themselves stoked it. 32.5% of the tweets in this research corresponded to passive Islamaphobia and here it concerned direct relationships with Muslim people characterised by violence and delinquency.

Table 4. Distinction between measurements of Islamaphobia

	Frequency	Percentage
Active Islamaphobia	468	21.2%
Passive Islamaphobia	717	32.5%
Non Islamaphobic	1,020	46.3%
Total	2,205	100.0%

Source: Produced by the author

Solely bearing in mind active and passive Islamaphobia measurements, the main underlying reason for Islamaphobia was delinquency (51.2%), followed by religion (41.8%). A quarter of the messages had Islamaphobic content referring to epistemology. The reasons behind Islamaphobia in the tweets were due to gender (23.5%) and terrorism (20.4%).

Table 5. Motives behind Islamaphobia

Variables	Percentage
Gender	23.5%
Terrorism	20.4%
Religion	41.8%
Epistemology	25.9%
Delinquency	51.2%

Source: Produced by the author

Although in the previous table gender and terrorism were the reasons which least appeared in the tweets, it can be seen that these two were the ones which contained most active Islamaphobia. That is, 61.9% of gender-related tweets were categorised as active Islamaphobia as were over half of the tweets related to terrorism and religion. However, almost seven out of ten delinquency-related tweets corresponded to passive delinquency.

The statistical analysis shows a perfect correlation between the causes and types of Islamaphobia where the ANOVA/Scheffe statistic was $p < 0.01$ for all variables.

Table 6. Reasons behind Islamaphobia by type

	Active Islamaphobia	Passive Islamaphobia
Gender**	61.9%	38.1%
Terrorism**	55.0%	45.0%
Religion**	53.3%	46.7%
Epistemology **	47.9%	52.1%
Delinquency**	31.5%	68.5%

Source: prepared by the author

Note: ** Highly significant differences (ANOVA/Scheffe post-hoc, $p < 0.01$)

In order to make an in-depth study on the different types of Islamaphobia in the hate speech on Twitter a decision tree was made using the CHAID method. In this approach the variables in the model were divided according to the chi squared meaning that contained the categories of the variable and their correlation to the other variables in the model. The dependent variable of the model was the type of

Islamaphobia which corresponded to node 0. The independent ones entered in the analysis were: gender, terrorism, religion, epistemology and delinquency. All were statistically significant apart from epistemology. Each node division in the CHAID method had a 95% confidence level. That is chi squared, p < 0.05 (Escobar, 1998). It must be added that in this model the risk of error (error discrepancy) was 0.01. That is, the model classified correctly with a margin of error of 1% (Berlanga et al., 2013).

Node 0, type Islamaphobia, branched out into two nodes (node 1 and 2) which belonged to the variable "delinquency-related" which indicated that this was the main producer variable in the model. It can be seen that in node 2, which corresponded to delinquency-related Islamaphobic tweets, 68.4% contained the passive kind. This node was divided into two more (nodes 5 and 6) on the basis of the gender-related variable. Node 6, which was made up of the tweets which included delinquency and gender-related Islamaphobic content showed that 83.3% belonged to the active kind. This node marked the end of this branch of the tree.

Node 5 showed those tweets which did not display gender-related Islamaphobia and were mostly (77.4%) those whose contents could be classified as the passive kind. At the end of this branch of the tree, node 5 branched out into two more nodes (nodes 11 and 12) which were religion-related. In both nodes the dominant type was passive Islamaphobia and 80.3% had no religious content and 69.2% respectively did have it.

Another branch of the tree stemmed from node 1, in which 63.8% of the tweets which did not contain Islamaphobia branched out into two other nodes (nodes 3 and 4) according to their relationship with the religion-related variable. Node 3 which corresponded to the tweets that did not contain delinquency nor religion-related Islamaphobia were those with a predominantly non- Islamaphobic message (85.2%). At the end of this branch, this node divided into two more (7 and 8) due to their statistical significance with the terrorism-related variable. Node 7 was that in which terrorism-related Islamaphobic content was not found in the tweets and the main stance (93.6%) was non-Islamaphobic. However, in node 8 there was terrorism-related Islamaphobia and here the broadest range of stances corresponded to the passive type (64.5%).

Regarding node 4, although there were no delinquency-related contents in the tweets (node 1) there was religion-related ones and this was the main stance (53.2%) for the active kind. This node branched out into two nodes (9 and 10) according to the terrorism-related content. Node 9 also covered religious, but also terrorism-related Islamaphobia content. In this node 68.8% of the content was the active kind. Conversely, node 10 showed no reasons for Islamaphobia, and this stance mainly corresponded to the passive kind (52.4%).

Graph 1 Segment tree profile for types of Islamaphobia
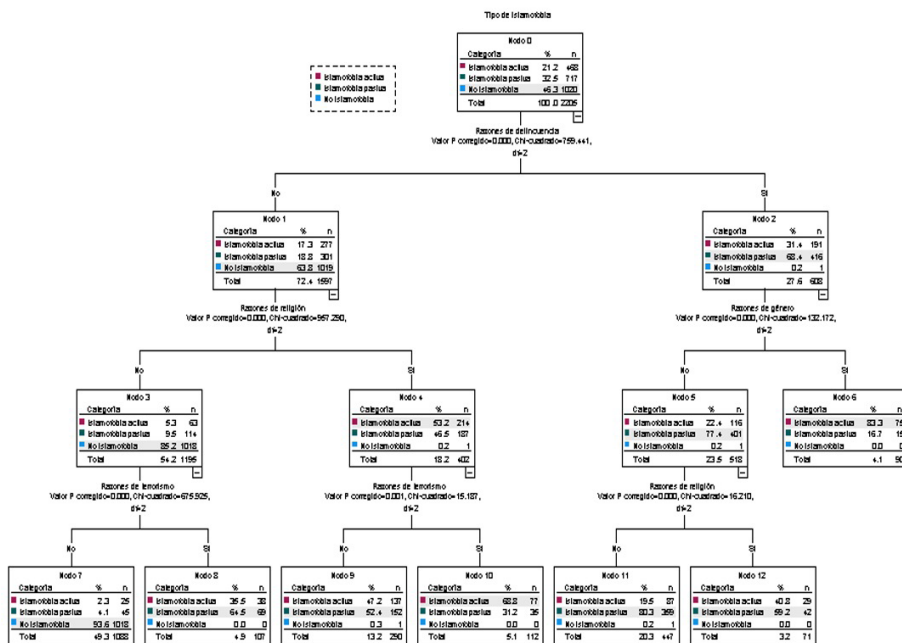
Source: Produced by the author

5. Discussion

Most of the tweets analysed contained features of hate speech, whether this was directly with active Islamaphobia, or inciting it with the passive kind. Two of the main reasons behind Islamaphobia were delinquency and religion. To be specific, delinquency was related to Islamaphobic messages about child and young immigrants in which the legal term MENAS (unaccompanied foreign national minor) was used in a pejorative way, excluding them from the whole group of minor migrants who enter Spain without any parents or guardians (Fuentes-Lara, 2021). The MENA stereotype was made up of a single picture of migrant children (APDHA, 2019) which were all Moroccans (*maurophobia)*. Immigrants lived on the steets and had a penchant for violence and crime and abused mind-altering substances such as hashish and glue (El-Madkouri, 2022).

A picture was conjured up on Islamaphobic tweets of child and young migrant delinquents who mainly engaged in theft, armed robbery, breached the peace, and were sometimes involved in more serious crimes such as rape. This discourse was part of the anti-immigration narrative used to justify rejecting foreigners in which migrants were portrayed as Muslim, poor and prone to delinquency (Cortina, 2017), and in this case, minors. There were two high points in the narrative thread of public danger "caused" by child and young migrants, which were in summer 2019 in Catalonia and the elections for the community of Madrid on 4th of May. In both cases this salience along with the political discourse spread by the political party VOX led to a rise in the number of tweets with Islamaphobic content.

Temporarily, religion-related Islamaphobia appeared in many tweets. For this reason, it was the second most used measurement in the messages. As we saw previously, when a Mena term was used it referred to Muslim children, but it was not the only time that it frequently appeared in terrorism and gender-related tweets. In all events, religion was used to assert Islamaphobic hate speech.

However, the main reasons behind active Islamaphobia were gender and terrorism-related tweets. This can be explained by the fact they were two topics in which anti-Islamaphobic profiles were highly mobile in the Islamaphobic narrative. These profiles displayed a constant Islamaphobic attitude, one that was mobilised against Muslim people and in which military language was used such as with the terms "invasion", "conquest" and "crusades". Added to this were those ambivalent to Islamaphobia. These profiles were very sensitive to emotive events and to news of great media significance (Campani, 2019). In fact, after the 2017 terrorist attacks in Catalonia the *hashtag* #StopIslam became a *Trending Topic* in Spain where there was a myriad of Islamaphobic messages from those opposed to Muslims. However, there were also a considerable number of tweets from lovers complaining about the Islamaphobic protests on the social networks. The response from profiles in favour of immigration enlarged the debate on social networks and made this more newsworthy, instead of creating an alternative narrative for holding Islamaphobic hate speech in check.

In this way, the Jihad terrorist attacks in Europe and the controversy aroused by banning the Islamic veil (hijab) in private companies and public institutions meant this topic became part of public and politicial discourse. This became even more prominent because both topics were interwoven with other issues in the anti-immigration narrative. With terrorism, it was fear of the other. That is, the securitisation initiated after the 11th September terrorist attacks when some politicians built up a discourse which stressed the need to defend oneself against the other, who was the Muslim (Alba Rico, 2016). As indicated by Sánchez- Estrada (2018) a discourse was built on fear of the other in which all people who physically resembled the notion of Muslims in the popular imagination were automatically branded as potential terrorists and jihadists.

 With this discourse fear or rejection created a category between "them" represented by a latent threat to "us" (porCausa, 2019). Social integration came into play in the discourse in which Muslim people could not integrate into Spanish society because Islamic culture was incompatible with "Western values" (González-Buendía, 2019), and the terrorist attacks and use of the veil were the most patent signs that what Muslim people settled in Spain aimed to do was to impose their culture and remain apart from Western culture.

The Islamic veil is interpreted by the against profiles as a symbol of submission of Muslim women and that there is no desire to integrate into Spanish society. This argument is particularly dangerous since it does not contemplate whether Muslim women can decide to wear the veil or not for themselves. As stated by González-Buendía (2019: 38) "the backwardness referred to here is not whether a woman wears a veil or not. The real issue is a woman cannot decide for herself whether to wear it or not". Most politicial parties with an anti-immigration narrative and which have seats in parliament have policies in their manifestos for banning the veil in public institutions (porCausa, 2020). In fact, every time a country passes restrictive legislation on this, as in Denmark, the number of tweets with gender-based Islamaphobic content rises using hashtags such as #NoAlVelo and #NoHijab.

The segment tree determined three profiles for attitudes with Islamaphobia on Twitter. Firstly, came those in favour of Muslims who showed no sign of delinquency, religion nor terrorism-based Islamaphobia (node 1, node 3 and node 7). Secondly, the profile for those against Muslims corresponded to those tweets whose messages contained delinquency and gender-related Islamaphobia respectively. (node 2 and node 6). This confirmed that stated previously that gender was one of the high points in Islamaphobic hate speech. Another profile for anti-Muslims corresponded to those tweets which did not contain delinquency-based Islamaphobia, but did base it on religion and terrorism (node 4 and node 10). On this profile the content implied that delinquency was not a driving force behind active Islamaphobia but religion, and terrorism, especially, were. In all the nodes for anti-Muslims the highest percentage was for active Islamaphobia.

Thirdly, the profiles ambivalent to Muslim people sent tweets containing delinquency but not gender nor religion-related Islamaphobia (node 2, node 5 and node 11). Another ambivalent profile was that which corresponded to the tweets whose contents were neither delinquency nor religion-related Islamaphobia, but they were terrorism-related (node 1, node 3 and node 8); and the ambivalent profile in which there was no delinquency, nor terrorism-related content, but there was some based on religion (node 1, node 4 and node 9). The ambivalent profile is related to passive Islamaphobia in the nodes mentioned. As seen in the ambivalent profile, this was more complex due to its volatility and the fact it was highly affected by specific events of importance in political discourse and in the media such as: a) delinquency (node 2) related to the situation of child and young immigrants; b) terrorism-related (node 8) influenced by Jihad terrorist attacks; and c) religion-related (node 4) as a temporary factor for the two previous ones. Also, it should be added that this manual classification of tweets could be used to create large-scale automated models for detecting it.

6. Conclusions

The main conclusion from this research shows Islamaphobic-based hate speech does exist. Firstly, Jihad terrorist attacks correspond with the main high point in Islamaphobia in Spain. Although it is particularly significant when terrorist attacks occur domestically as on 11th March 2004 and on 17th August 2017 in Catalonia, active Islamaphobia also rises with any attack in Europe. To be specific, the terrorist attacks in Catalonia against Charlie Hebdo in París on 7th January 2015 turned #StopIslam into a *Trending Topic* in Spain. However, the main trend in France was #*IslamNonCoupable*, which contrasted the differences between both countries.

In turn, and as indicated by Velasco and Rodríguez-Alarcón (2020), the terrorist attacks polarised society which went from having ambivalent stances to being immigration *haters*. However, these changes were temporary due to the polarising effect the event had on audiences. Therefore, the Jihad terrorist attacks in Europe increased Islamaphobia in Spain and converted those with ambivalent stances on immigration to adopting that of *haters*.

Secondly, it may be concluded that in virtue of this research myths and prejudices about the Muslim religion promoted Islamaphobia in Spain. This is exemplified in the use of the Islamic veil or *hijab* in connection with western democratic values. In fact, these two categories are closely linked as there is a correlation between tweets equating the need for Muslim women to wear the hijab with an attack on western freedoms and an infringement of the democratic value of equality. It must be stated that in a specific situation such as regulating the Islamic veil in private companies and in public, the debate expands as do Islamaphobic stances. However, this concerns more emotive reactions, and thus temporary ones, unlike when they are based on religion and cultural values in which case, they are constant causes of active Islamaphobia.

Islamaphobia is shown with the attitudes and opinions of Spanish people on Twitter. According to the tweets, most of which are subjective or opinion, three profiles for attitudes to Islamaphobia were identified: in favour, against and ambivalent. To be specific, ambivalent profiles are volatile and turn against Islam when the reasons behind Islamaphobia are based on religion, terrorism and delinquency. In turn, this is seen with messages categorised as passive Islamaphobia. In fact, one of the main original contributions proposed in this article is an approach which takes a close look at society by performing an analysis of attitudes and opinions on immigration, which in this case is Islamaphobia, by avoiding or reducing the social desirability bias in polling (Cea D'Ancona, 2009).

To conclude, and responding to the research question posed in this article on whether there is a hate speech discourse in Spain, Islamaphobia does exists on social networks and there is implicit hate speech. This discourse is stoked by those against immigration and intensified with Islamaphobia and by the ambivalent profiles to immigration who react to terrorist attacks or portrayals of child and teenage immigrants by rejecting Muslims and joining the Islamaphobic discourse.

As indicated by the institutions which study these new migrant narratives, hate speech cannot be countered by more messages because all this does is make them more socially relevant. One example

of this is when after the terrorist attacks the flow of tweets between Islamaphobes and those with a favourable attitude to Muslims increased. This led to a rise in *salience* and, thus the topic became more relevant, as seen in the "battle" for the *Trending Topic* between #StopIslam vs #StopIslamofobia. Therefore, rather than provoking confrontation about hate speech, in our view the narrative framework should be changed (porCausa, 2020) or the current hegemonic narrative be replaced (More in Common, 2019).

7. Limitations of this research

In this research the messages users have uploaded onto the social network, Twitter, were used and this means there are certain limitations. Firstly, the number of active users on Twitter is falling as are the number of new accounts and in 2021 it ranked as the fourth social network in Spain (González, 2021). Although there is no predominant stance as a social network, Twitter is still the favourite network for expressing social and political ideals. Secondly, the analysis of the Twitter app is of limited use for exploring the sociodemographic profile of users. Variables such as gender, age, educational level and environment may provide valuable information for researching Islamophobic hate speech. This is expecially true, when Twitter has an age limit, since the youngest audiences prefer other social networks such as Instagram and Twitch (Piñeiro, 2021) and there is a group which are of legal age, but are not on social networks or just have Facebook (Arcila Calderón, Blanco Herrero and Valdez Apolo, 2020).

Thirdly, the content analysis was affected by the temporary nature of specific events. In this way, specific events such as Jihad terrorist attacks can enlarge the sample size considerably in terms of terrorism and/or religion-related content, although this was not a constant reason behind Islamaphobia. This made an analysis of Twitter very sensitive and, therefore, temporary sections had to be chosen very carefully to encapsulate specific events which, otherwise, might have altered the results of this research.

8. Specific contribution of each author

Contributions	Signees
Conception and study design	Signee 1, signee 2
Search for documents	Signee 1
Data collection	Signee 1, signee 2
Analysis and critical interpretation of data	Signee 1, signee 2
Review and approval of versions	Signee 1

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