

Preface

In the last years, public and political debate in many countries has been formed by the issue of migration. Migration is diverse, ranging from internal movement within the European Union to fleeing from civil wars, for instance as part of the so-called refugee crisis, and also covering the quest for economic improvement as well as displacement as a result of persecution of ethnic or religious minorities. Both the outward aspects and the motivation and background of migration are extremely diverse and complex.

In view of this, debates about migration have increased significantly in recent years. Especially nationalist and right-wing groupings show characteristic anti-migration leanings in their discourse, which in turn does not go without dissent in public discussion and political discourse. Besides scientific linguistic research, migration and immigration politics – but also how migration and migrants are publicly discussed – are at the heart of lively and sometimes contentious debate. *Metaphorik.de* would like become involved in this discussion and is dedicating both this and the forthcoming issue to the focus topic of migration. Articles will concentrate on the central question to which extent metaphor and metonymy shape semantic structures and govern discourse. Analysing them will let us gain deep insights into the perception and treatment of migration and refugees. As such, we were and still are very pleased with the many submissions as a reaction to our public call for articles. Some of these have been selected and more closely study the European perspective on migration in this themed issue.

Marco Agnetta's article starts the issue, discussing the deconstruction of mainly anti-refugee and xenophobic metaphors. He explains which methods and argumentative strategies reveal images as manipulative in hate speech and how to develop counter-strategies. Sara Colombo and Daniela Pirazzini discuss the metaphor "The Mediterranean as a graveyard" in the context of deadly refugee shipwrecks, directing attention to the fact that this image has existed since the twelfth century. The article written by Sandra Issel-Dombert and Aline Widors-Lohéac takes another angle, analysing metaphors in public debate about the refugee crisis in Italy. Kathleen Plötner's study of function and effect of metaphor in the Spanish discussion of refugees also looks at the Southern European context. Mersina Mujagić describes how metaphors have penetrated Bosnian reporting on refugee movements, particularly since 2015,

which is interesting because a large part of the Bosnian people are themselves affected by refugee and displacement experiences. Finally, Máté Toth, Péter Csátár and Krisztián Majoros investigate the Hungarian discourse on refugees during 2014 and 2015.

These articles underline the social, cultural, political convergences and divergences in how metaphors are used to talk about refugees and migration. It goes without saying that the topic has not been exhaustively treated, as is also evidenced by our forthcoming issue that continues this focus. Additional research perspectives are definitely offered thanks to the international perspective that transcends the boundaries of speech communities. We would like to explicitly thank Kerstin Sterkel (Saarbrücken) for her wonderful and extremely helpful work in creating the layout. Our gratitude goes to all contributors for the constructive collaboration and to our readers for their loyal interest in *metaphorik.de*.

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