



Refugee or Migrant?

Mixing methods for social media analysis

Digital Humanities Lab

- Advancing the humanities through digital methods
- Focus on big 'textual' data
- Interdisciplinary
 - Events & Entities
 - Change
 - Connections



Marieke van Erp



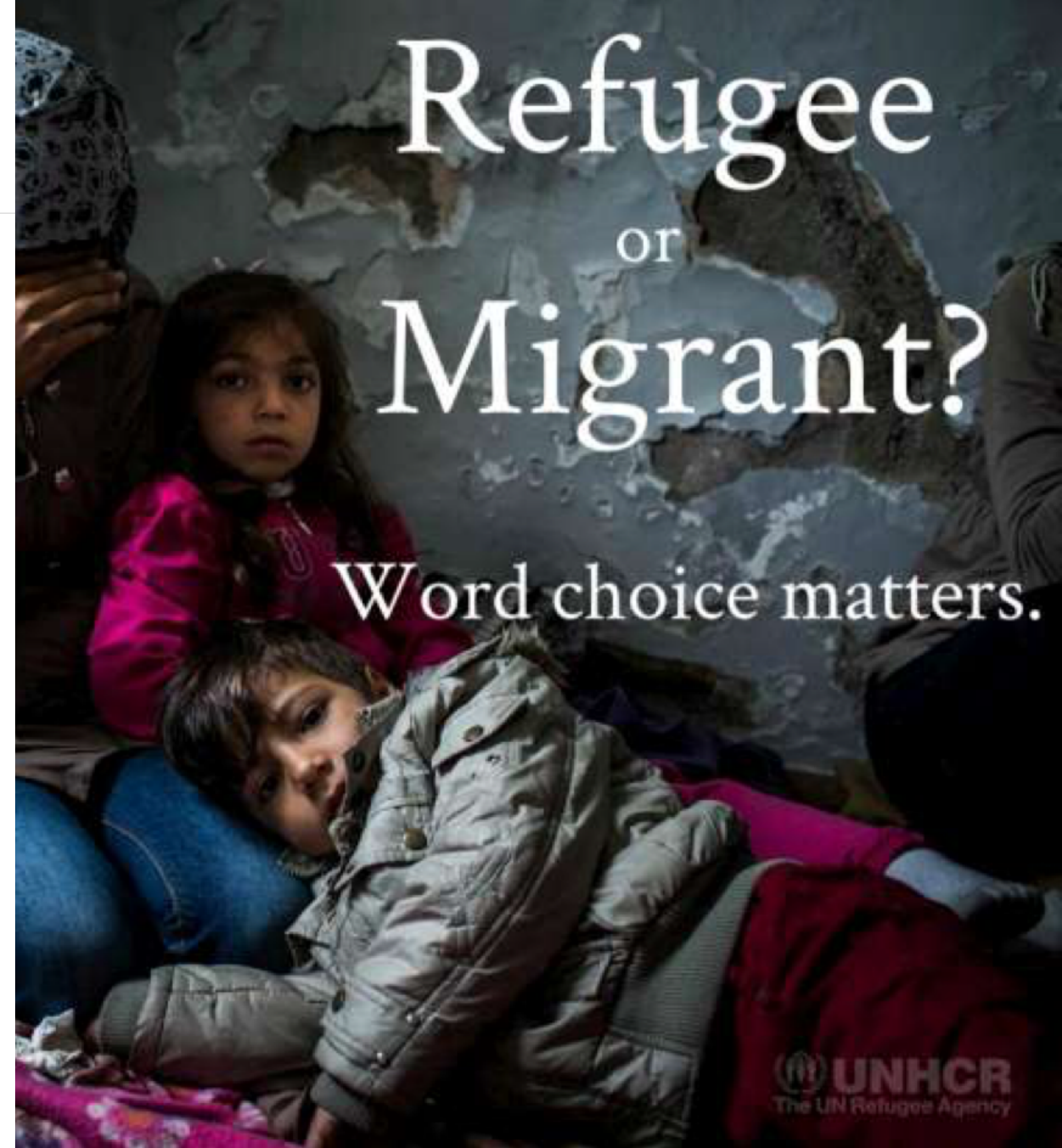
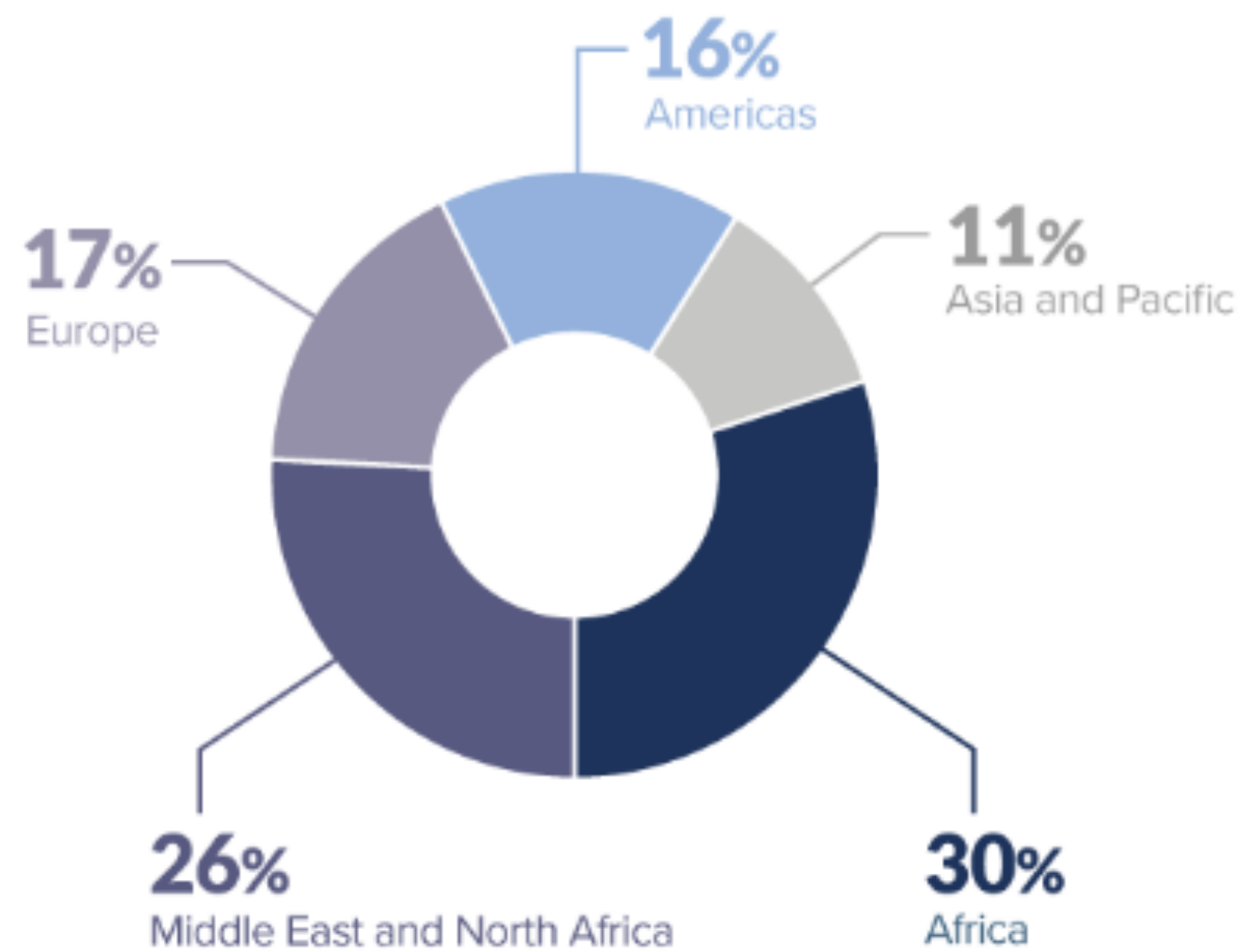
Melvin Wevers



Adina Nerghes

Refugee crisis in a nutshell

 **65.6 million**
forcibly displaced people worldwide

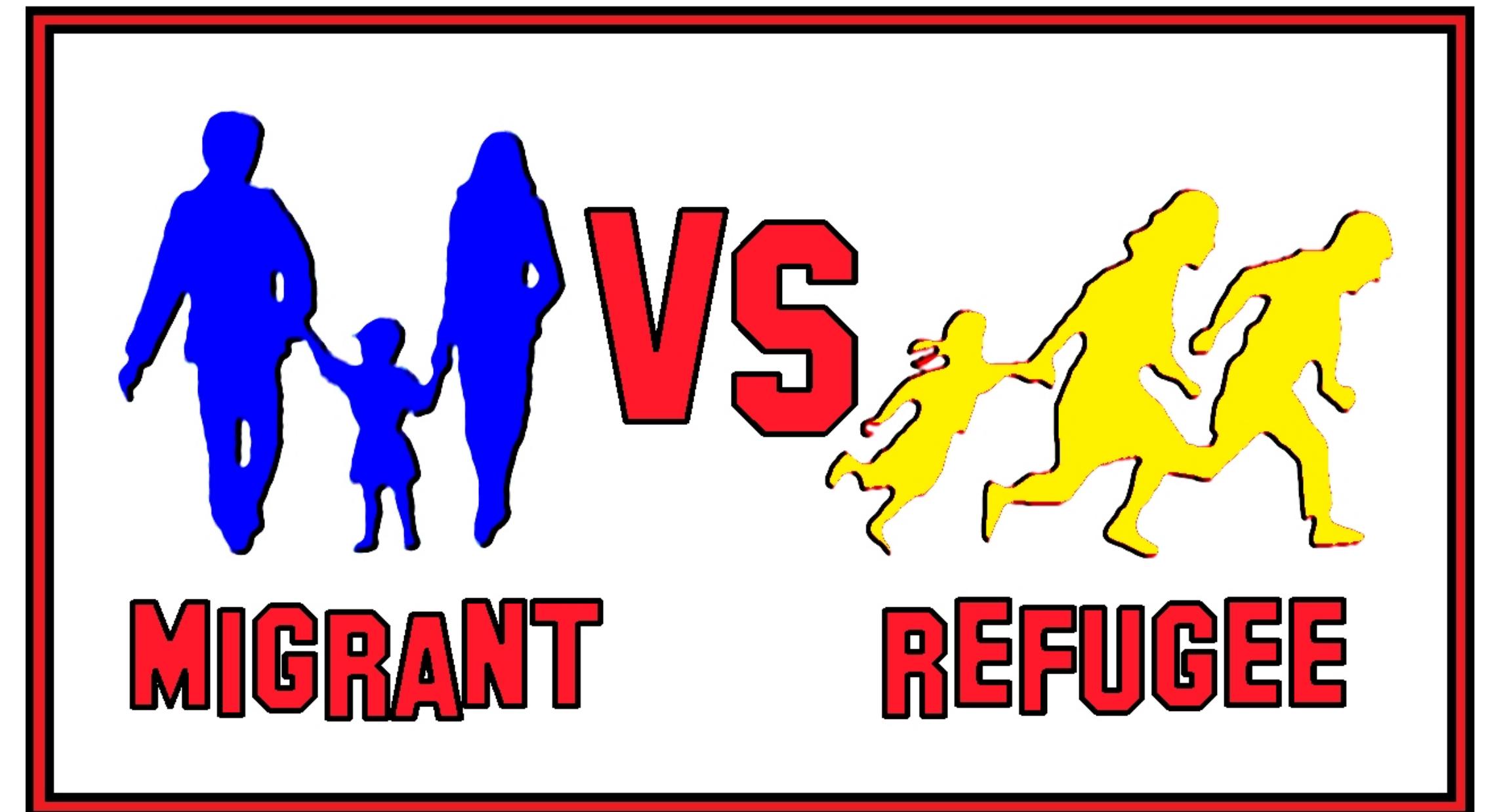
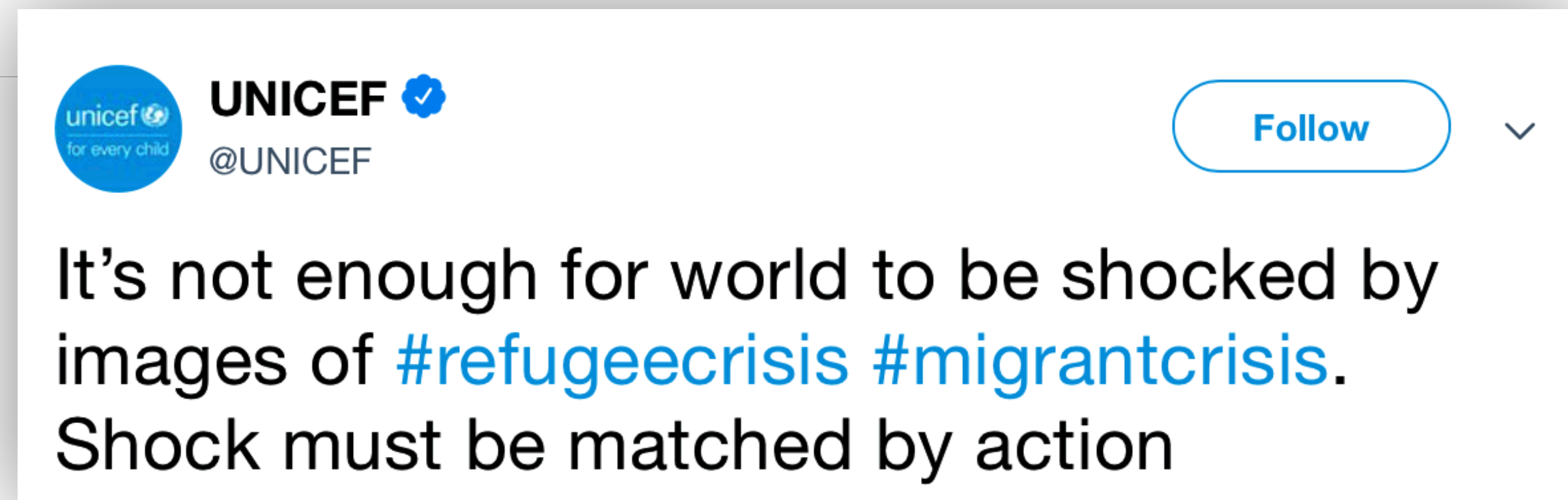


Debates on the refugee crisis in social media

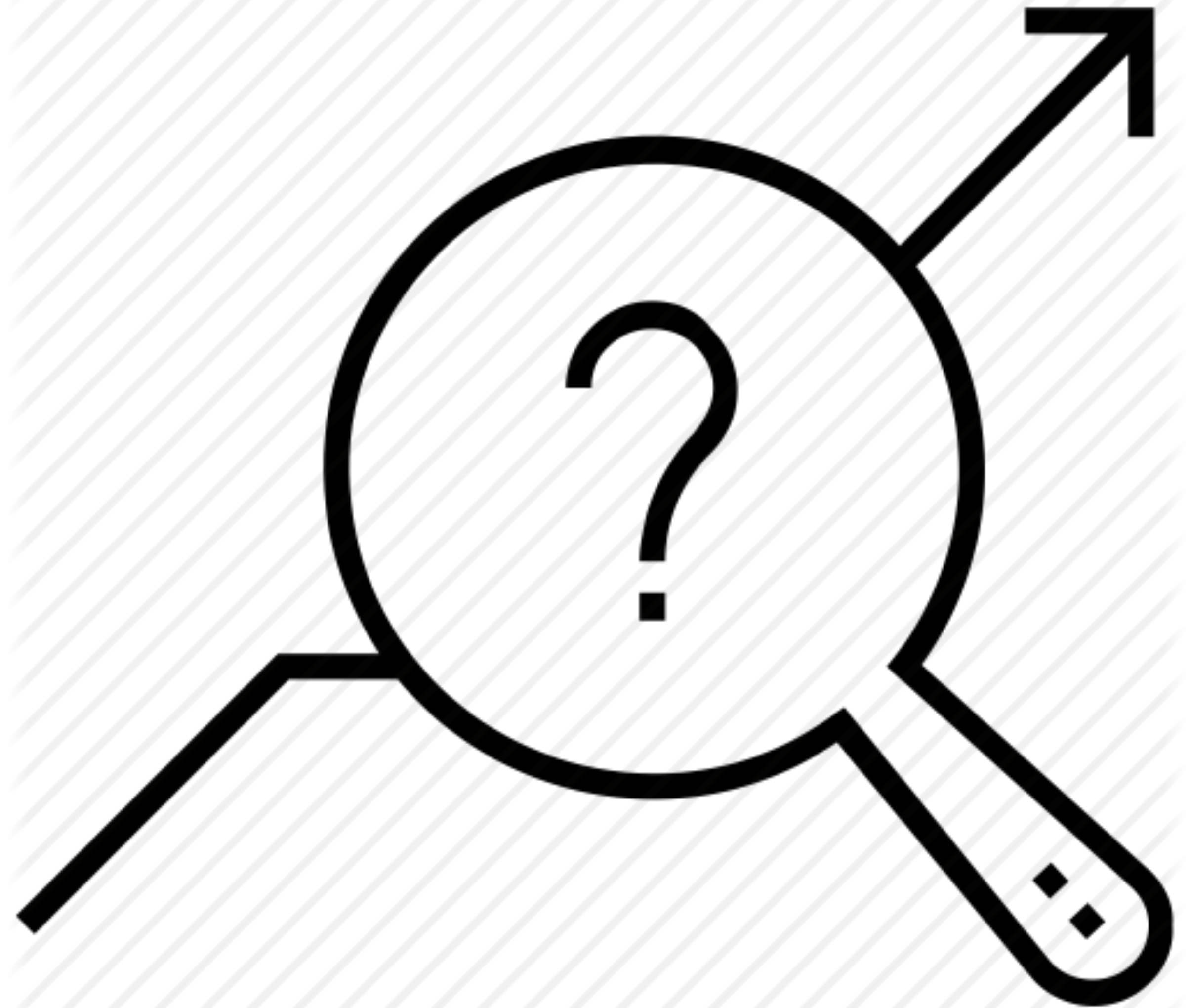
- ‘**refugee** crisis’ and ‘**migrant** crisis’ widely used in news and social media
 - ‘Refugee’ – people **fleeing** conflict or persecution
 - ‘Migrant’ – **improving** economic situation

Label use:

- Alter perceptions
- Influence behaviors
- Undermine public support
- Steer public opinion

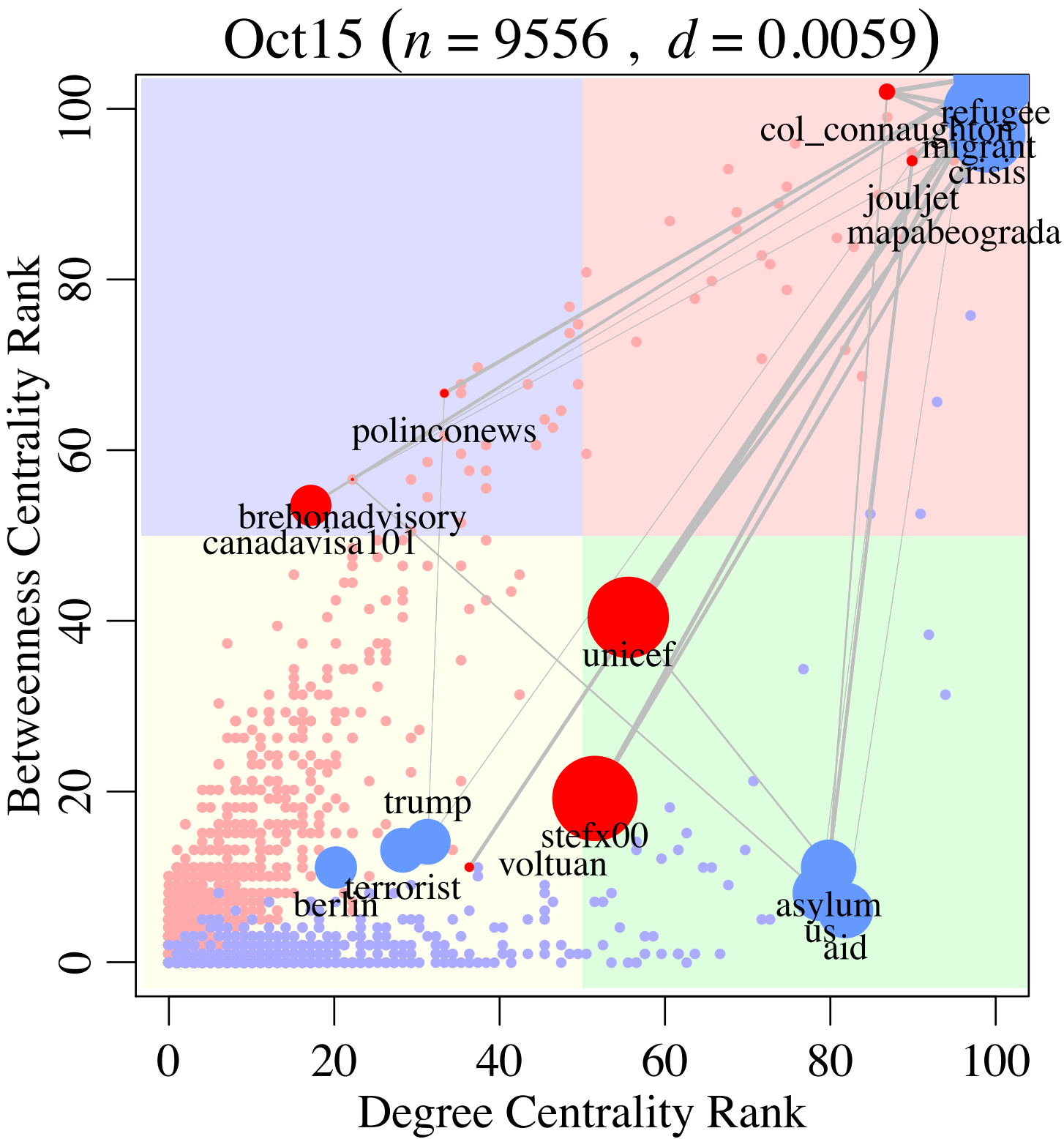


**What are the patterns of label use in
online discussion of the European
refugee/migrant crisis and what are the
sentiments associated with these labels?**



Mixing methods

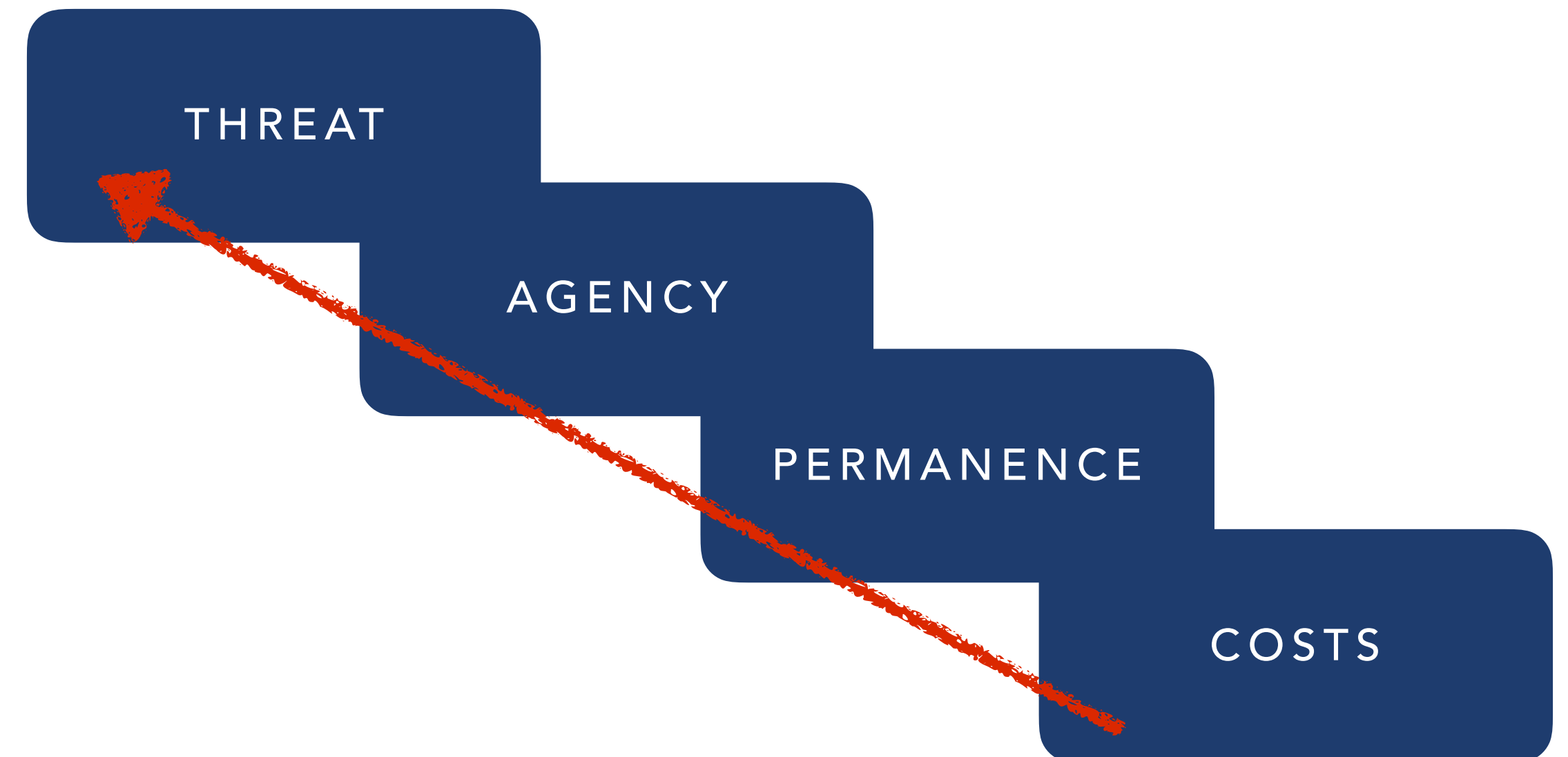
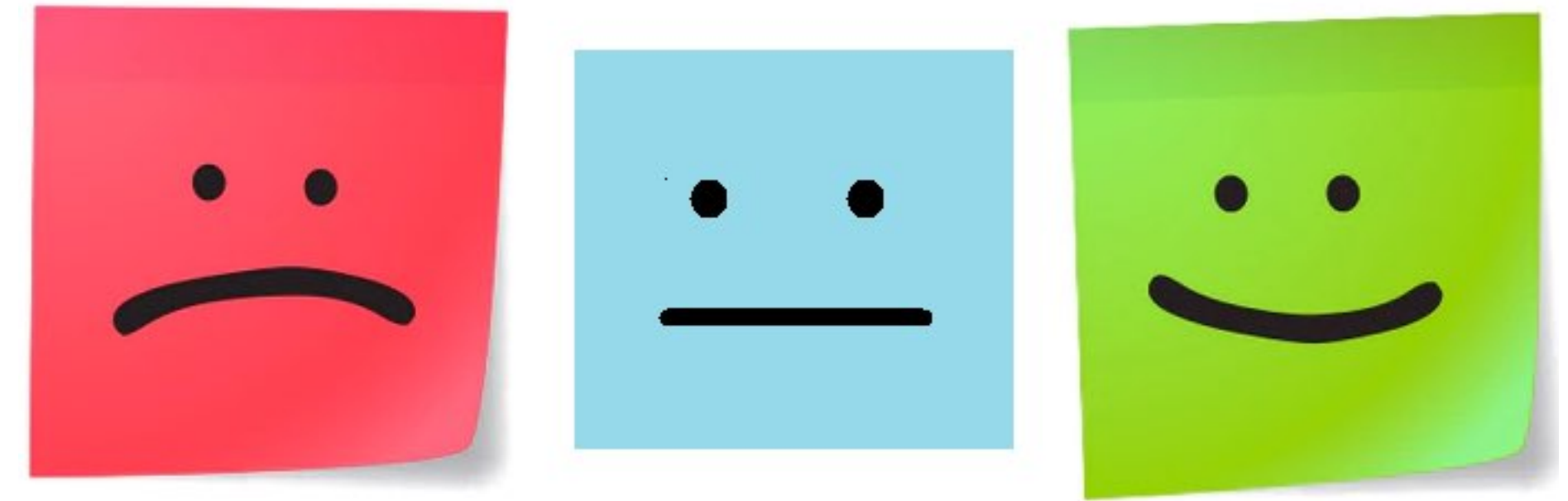
- Theories drawn from the humanities and social and communication sciences:
 - Framing and labelling
 - Socio-semantic networks
- Computer Science and Computational linguistics:
 - Topic modelling
 - Sentiment analysis
- Expert knowledge of social media platforms and the refugee crisis



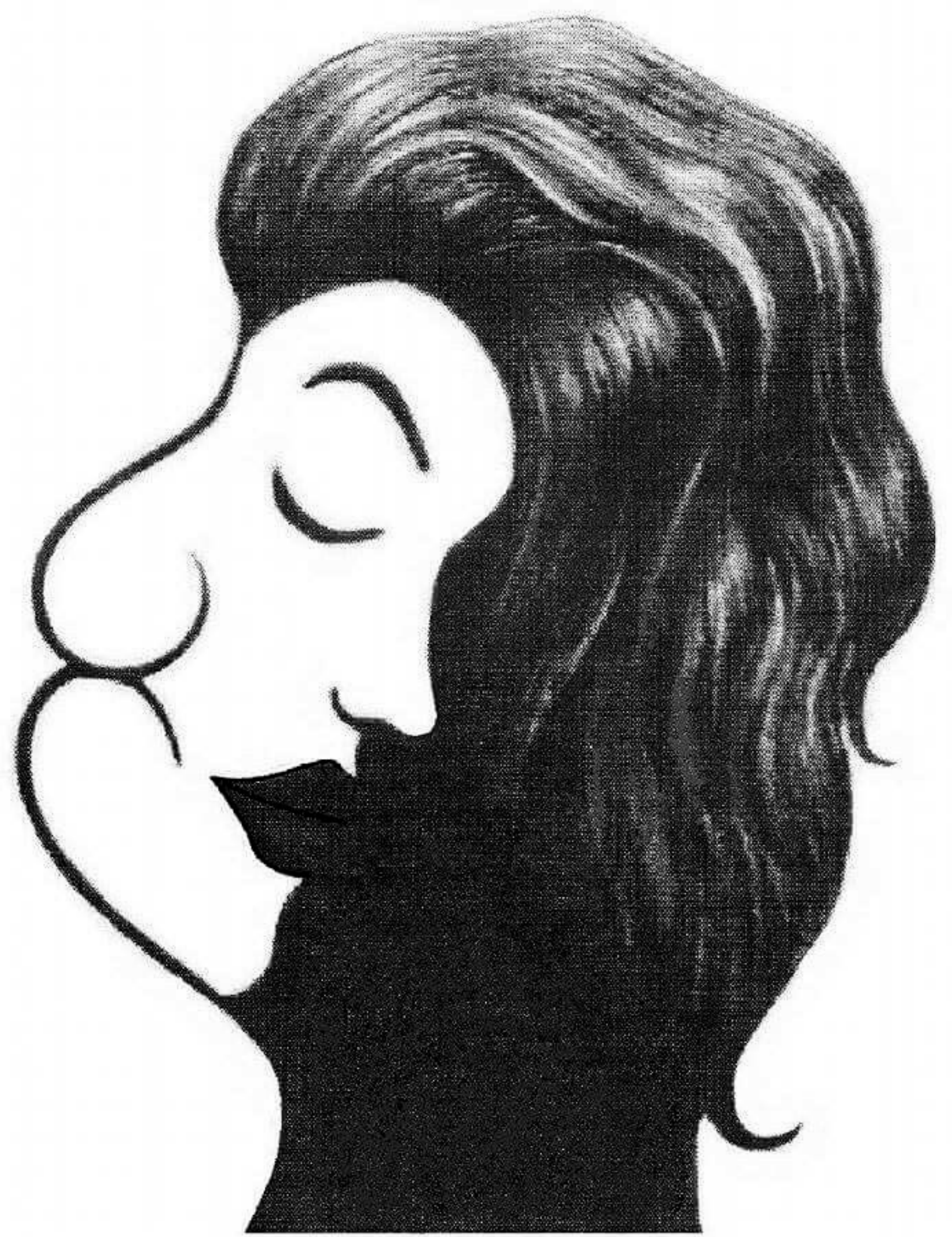
Code	Labels
Refugee	Refugee, refugee crisis
Syrian	Syrian, syrian migrant, syrian refugee
Migrant	Migrant, migrant crisis
Immigrant	Immigrant, immigrant crisis
Threat	Jihadist, terrorist, criminal, rapefugee

Word choice matters

- Sentiment ordering of immigrant (most negative) to migrant to refugee to Syrian may indicate a multidimensional mixture of:
 - **Threat:** actors have been portrayed as constituting a criminal threat to host societies
 - **Agency:** actors' having relatively higher agency in crossing-borders
 - **Permanence:** whether or not actors are expected to permanently reside in a host country
 - **Economic Cost:** refers to the expectation of economic costs incurred by the presence of these actors in a host country



Framing matters and it affects the ways in which we perceive the world around us!



Mixing methods in a nutshell

- Linguistics approaches and computer science:
 - Tools and analysis algorithms
- Humanities, social sciences and expert knowledge:
 - Relate data and results to the social context
- Different perspectives are not mutually exclusive and they can inform one another.





Thank you!

“Solving the refugee crisis begins by changing the way we see them.”

Ben Doherty