Research conducted for Channel4 Dispatches: Racist Britain

Carl Miller
Francesca Arcostanzo
Josh Smith
Alex Krasodomski-Jones
Susann Wiedlitzka
Rooham Jamali
Jack Dale

Centre for the Analysis of Social Media, Demos
1. Migration and Brexit
The Wider Discussion.
20 May - 2nd June, over 100,000 Tweets were sent mentioning UK MP and EU referendum hashtag.
In the run up to the vote, Leave campaigners (who each sent 5+ pro-Brexit Tweets) sent 97,000 Tweets, pro-Remain sent 13,000 Tweets.
immigration was one of the three key themes of the campaign
Sovereignty
- 20th May-26th May: 28% Leave, 33% Remain
- 27th May-2nd June: 25% Leave, 39% Remain

Immigration
- 20th May-26th May: 17% Leave, 20% Remain
- 27th May-2nd June: 14% Leave, 28% Remain

Economy
- 20th May-26th May: 55% Leave, 47% Remain
- 27th May-2nd June: 61% Leave, 33% Remain

Algorithm: 70% accurate
General discussion of migration and immigration spiked over the Brexit period.
258,553 tweets

22nd June-30th June

Discussions of Immigration Peaked over Brexit

Migration Tweets over Time

Results Day
Some Immigration Discussion explicitly linked to Brexit

#Brexit, EU, #StrongerIn #BetteroffOut etc.
Discussions of Migrants were Highly Disputed
Co-Location of Language around Migrants

SafetyPin (1,434)
Solidarity (501)
Welcome (98)
(im)migrants
Out (698)
Deport (686)
Bloody (415)
Leave (662)
2. Xenophobia
16,151 tweets used a term related to xenophobia or an anti-immigrant attitude.
16,151 tweets

RefugeesNotWelcome
DefendEurope
WhiteGenocide
WhitePower
SendThemHome
MakeBritainWhiteAgain
Get Out We Voted Leave
Londonistan
Rapefugee
StopImmigration
FuckIslam

(Likely only a small kernel of the relevant conversation)
13,236 tweets using a term related to xenophobia or an anti-immigrant attitude in the wake of the Brexit vote itself.

24th June – 1st July
Xenophobia in the Wake of the Referendum

Tweets containing Xenophobic Language over Time

Results Day
But this conversation was contested.

Derogatory: 5,484 Tweets
Supportive: 10,671 Tweets

Algorithm: 76% Accurate
Xenophobia in the Wake of the Referendum

Xenophobic Tweets over Time
From the 24th of June...
On the 24th

- Supportive: 3,549 Tweets
- Derogatory: 707 Tweets

On the 25th

- Supportive: 2,225 Tweets
- Derogatory: 502 Tweets
Xenophobia in the Wake of the Referendum

Xenophobic Tweets over Time

Supportive tweets peak then fade, while derogatory tweets maintain a steady volume.
3. Islamophobia
Across the world 4,123,705 Tweets were sent containing a word that can be anti-Islamic between 18th March - 30 June.
but some of these terms are very broad

Jihadi
terrorist
Rag-head
Sand flea
Dune Nigger
Sand Monkey
Rug-pilot
Camel Fucker
Rug pilot
Paki
Muzrats
Etc.
These were analysed by a series of algorithms to find Tweets which were derogatory and explicitly anti-Islamic.

100 Tweets randomly selected: 78 were judged to be hateful.
28,034 tweets were judged to be from the UK, explicitly anti-Islamic and derogatory.

18th March - 30 June
Islamophobia Online

Long-view of Islamophobia on Twitter
Islamophobia Online

Long-view of Islamophobia on Twitter

- Brussels Attacks
- Zayn Malik Racially Abused
- Orlando Attack
- EU Referendum
Islamophobia Online

Islamophobic Tweets over the Brexit Period

Small peak beginning 8pm on June 23rd to midnight on the 25th
479 anti-Islamic Tweets on the 24th June

146 anti-Islamic Tweets on the 25th of June
EU Referendum roughly comparable to a terrorist attack...

...but not comparable to Zayn Malik being abused by Azealia Banks.
RIP to you bunch of paki nigger muslim cunts
you mad you gotta leave? fucking pakis
Too many muzzies and left wingers voting remain
I for one don't want this Muslim scum in our country
#VoteLeave @XXX @XXX @XXX @XXX https://t.co/1U7103c1IP
hitler was right fuck the pakis

someone said we're losing cos pakis are voting tomorrow fgs

@XXX @XXX @XXX Close the borders, and keep the scum out. We don't want to be another third world Muslim country. #voteleave

@XXX @XXX But it's okay for fucking muslim scum to march down our streets applauding isis & spewing hatred of the West.

THERESA MAY HAS BEEN SOFT ON
PAKI RAPE GANGS, SOFT ON IMMIGRATION SUPPORTED REMAIN & CLAIMS SHARIA COURTS GREATLY BENEFIT BRITAIN #VoteGove

Bare Niggers and Pakis voted out ffs what a bunch of fucking hypocrites

Jewish elite scum run the EU they flood us with Muslim scum and you wanted to remain you absolute fool, wake up https://t.co/GX5hctnFbh

There's gona be a day when they kick us out of the country #VoteLeave get all these paki bastards out because of all these paki freshy budday that voted leave

To all those who voted remain: Jihadi Khan wants #Londonistan!!! A Muslim city seperate from the UK! This is what happens when u elect Muslims!!!

When the jihad starts good luck.

https://t.co/SWtYcmfvws
#PostRefRacism.
Two hashtags emerged after the referendum.

#SafetyPin
...to show solidarity with migrants.
44,003 Tweets

#PostRefRacism
...to raise awareness of xenophobia and racism.
56,089 Tweets

From June 25nd to July 4th
98,948 tweets were sent using either #postrefracism or #safetypin.

From June 25th to July 4th
Two Key Hashtags in the Wake of the Vote
Tweets containing #PostRefRacism and #SafetyPin

Concentrated June 25th to 29th
An algorithm was built to split Tweets into:

Those *generally* raising awareness of hate crime

— and —

Those *specifically* providing accounts of it
Of the 98,948 Tweets

Specific accounts  
17,260

General Awareness  
81,688

This includes Retweets

Algorithm: 83% accurate
Within the 17,260...

Direct accounts of harassment

Relaying other accounts of harassment the writer had heard

Some more general expressions of solidarity with migrants not removed by the algorithm
Postrefracism

General Awareness vs. Specific Stories

Then an explosion of concern

Most specific stories occur over 26th, 27th, 28th
Of 17,260 specific stories... 

2,413 were original posts

— and —

14,847 were retweets
Postrefracism

Specific stories: Retweets vs. Non-Retweets

Original posts are shadowed by large amounts of re-sharing
None of these measures are perfect: algorithms make mistakes.

We don’t know if any of the accounts are true.

Not geo-locationally filtered, but were using a UK-based hashtag.
Of the 17,621 Tweets...

- 5,690 (32%) came from another country
- 6,720 came from the UK

Of the 6,720 Tweets from the UK...

- 5,372 could be accurately located to a sub-regional level in the UK
Postrefracism

Mapping - Caveats

The location of the Tweet is where the incident is reported, not necessarily where it occurs.

The map includes people reporting the incident.

To some degree, it reflects the population density of the UK.
Accounts of hate crime: original and retweets
936 of the 2,413 original stories could be placed on a map
One of our crew at #Bournemouth bus stop last night had youths shout "F****ing immigrant" from car window. #PostRefRacism @PostRefRacism
Friday refugee British Citizen living in Oxford 15 yrs, told by colleagues in factory where he works - now you can go home #PostRefRacism
Pre-ref I was told to go back to where I was born by some ignoramus I work with. Postrefracism comes as no surprise really. Shame on you UK.
People's true colours are definitely coming out now, they feel justified being racist, homophobic, xenophobic c***s! #PostRefRacism #tryme
So much hate!!! It's all fun & games until you walking through Leeds and someone shouts "Oi Paki, We Voted Leave, Get out" #PostRefRacism
Boy shouts "shut up you black cunt" in my 13 year olds daughter's face at school on day of result. #PostRefRacism #postbrexitracism
Today a group of men called me a "Paki Cunt" and told me to go home. In London. Where I was born, raised and lived for 32yrs.
#PostRefRacism
Two notable patients in A&E tonight; both Romanian, both been beaten up by yobs. #PostRefRacism
A friend was told to 'Go back to your f**ing country nigger' in Oxford city. She is a Master's student at Oxford University. #PostRefRacism
I'm shaking. Just seen a group of 6 kids on scooters circling a Muslim woman and shouting 'make Britain Great again'.

#PostRefRacism
Just been told "Brendan, don't call me racist, I'm not. What's racist about wanting all the ragheads out of my country?" #PostRefRacism
And so it begins. Just received this text from a number I don't recognise #PostRefRacism

Congradulations to you and also to Daniel York and to Anna Chen for helping us in winning the Brexit vote, Mr McGregor! I am sure you know you get a ferry from Harwich to Rotterdam, in Holland, the Netherlands! Happy to buy one for you, or do you want one for Hong Kong instead?! From an old friend from Yorkshire! :) :P
#PostRefRacism - Vile Islamophobic booklets being distributed to homes in Perry Barr/Aston area. #Birmingham
For more information contact:

Carl Miller, Research Director, Centre for the Analysis of Social Media, Demos
carl.miller@demos.co.uk