

## Ideological War (I)

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2018 - rafaeldiazarias



Every day the black hole

that is WhatsApp spits on our screens hate messages .

In public networks (Twitter and Facebook to a lesser extent) I have installed controls that (and I guess algorithms) prevent reaching me insults, hoaxes or messages that distill hatred. At best, some clueless *troll*.

WhatsApp is something else. Many groups are among friends, family, co-workers or neighbors, for functional reasons (sharing photos, documents, setting up a meeting). But the network that was created with a specific purpose soon began to circulate messages in the best of cases partisan but often with directly racist, xenophobic and chauvinistic content. I guess it will be even worse in Snatchap, adolescents messaging messages that are automatically eliminated quickly.

These are messages that the algorithms that would not reach me because search systems and social networks are designed to create an echo chamber to feed you what you like, what you agree on the assurance that this way you'll spend more time and attention on the network and the respective company will be more profitable.

So, **thanks for letting WhatsApp show the tip of the iceberg glimpse of the dark side**. It is painful because messages that conflict with your beliefs come from people who already appreciate what you consider reasonable.

It remains to study these sectarian messages, a few steps or directly beyond the border of hatred.

Most **do not indicate the source** and are cut and pastes or forward content that has become viral. Some are directly hoaxes, others a biased interpretation of truth or half - truth. Often they appeal to "pass on" to expose some populist conspiracy or an "undisclosed good news" of the progressive Left, hidden by Spanish television programmes TVE, La Sexta and the daily newspaper El Pais. Or, from the other side of the front line, the conspirator to denounce is global capitalism, the empire (the US, of course) and the Patriarchate. And they always carry a **high emotional charge** .

**This daily flow indicates an increasingly dangerous polarization**. We are in an ideological struggle and truth and reason do not count. **The important thing is to download our indignation** .

And if it's a lie, they rectify, as stated in one of these messages about some trade unionists who had allegedly spent thousands of euros on a binge.

**In Spain, Francoism is an ideological rift that divides us.** It is actually a much older division: (18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> Century) Francophiles against patriots; liberals against absolutists; moderates against progressives; supporters of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century Spanish Queen Isabel against Carlists; Republicans against supporters of King Alfonso ...It is a division with family and class origins, but largely a matter of choice. And once the choice is made, everything stems from it: our opinion on any measure of this or any other government, the general worldview, countries we admire and others we despise, biased criticism of public figures. And with respect to this rift, or its origin, another divisive factor is the Catholic Church.

**In this ideological war a partisan message is not so serious, however much the reality is lied about or twisted as those messages that incite contempt, if not hatred of others, people who are different, and who supposedly threatens us .**

**Racism, xenophobia, nationalism are no longer taboo** - "Let's speak clearly" – these are the fuel of far - right parties (please do not call them populist) that threaten to end the EU, armouring the internal and external borders of Europe. Human rights are an annoying formality for these forces.

**In the European elections next spring, so uninteresting to the Spanish media, which is exclusively centred on internal affairs, our whole livelihood is at stake.** And these messages of hate will intensify. It is all the same if they are created by Kremlin departments (with a very crass content and an obvious lack of Spanish context), by party offices, media agencies serving different entities or simply the bad tempered drooling of any Spanish person. The result is always tension, fear, false indignation.

By way of relief I will make an elementary refutation of some of the ideas that are repeated in these messages. As this article is already too long, I will comment in the coming days about some of these Spanish partisan messages and messages of hate.

**One last request. Do not share anonymous, unconfirmed messages, or those which revile or despise the adversary, that violate the dignity of others, of people who are different.**