universität wien

MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of Master's Thesis

The veil of humanitarianism

EU identity and the migration crisis in political discourse

verfasst von / submitted by

Christine Seimebua

Angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science (MSc)

Wien, 2021 / Vienna, 2021

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt / degree programme code as it appears on the student record sheet:	UA 066 550
Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt / degree programme as it appears on the student record sheet:	Masterstudium Communication Science
Betreut von / Supervisor:	Univ.-Prof. Dr. Katharine Sarikakis

Introduction: Political Discourse, Power and the Migration Crisis

A long tradition of communication research has proven time and time again that language and language use are not neutral. Language and discourse exist within society and are thus influenced by subjective and societal representations of reality. Language and communication have become a social practice in and of themselves, apart from being tools to describe social practices (Davis, 1985; Eco, 1976; Fairclough, 1995; McGregor, 2010). Within a culture, communication (in)forms socially shared images as well as shapes, reflects and creates attitudes (Gerbner, 1985). Discourse is defined as an omnipresent way of knowing, valuing, and experiencing reality. It can be a tool used to assert power, organize resistance, or facilitate as well as restrict normalization of themes. An important function of discourses is also the maintenance of cultural hegemony (McGregor, 2010).

The relevance of political discourse is indisputable since it directly influences the public agenda and therefore public opinion. Political discourse is defined by its actors – politicians and institutions (van Dijk, 1997) – and is widely distributed by the mass media, which is used by politicians to mobilize support or create legitimacy (van Dijk, 1995, 2013). Thus, political discourse can shape, or reinforce, ideological patterns and attitudes in wider society. The necessity to analyse political discourse is given by its (social) power, as it may provide insights into the features of the political context, including power relations, ideological biases and more, which are seldomly displayed openly or are so entrenched in the social fabric that they remain unscrutinised (van Dijk, 1997). The migration crisis and the surrounding humanitarian discourse are a fitting and grim example of this. The migratory influx of 2015/16, its ongoing production of death and desperation at the European border and the EU's collective (non-)response have led to proclamations of a '*humanitarian crisis*' by activist organizations as well as of a '*crisis of humanitarianism*' by the academic community. The former represents the very real and dire situation for migrants at the border, while the latter deals with a theoretical one:

Europe seems to have abandoned the long-standing tradition of European humanitarianism. The notion of European moral integrity is commonly shared among Europeans (European Commission, 2012) and regularly part of public discourse. Whether the news report on human rights abuses elsewhere, or on the EU mediating in regional conflicts, the moral superiority cemented in European ideology functions as justification for interference as well as criticism. This aspect of European identity is essential to Eurocentrism and it entails the innocence of modernity (Dussel et al., 2000; Poole, 2012). To the contrary, European actors have been accused of being complicit, and even participating in the violations of human rights and the disregard for moral humanitarian obligations (Amnesty International, 2020a, 2020b). Moreover, the idea of a morally integer and humanitarian Europe stands in sharp contrast to the history of European imperialism and colonialism (Palladino & Woolley, 2018; Woolf, 2012). Still, it is a prevalent element of European hegemony.

This study is interested in examining how this ideological element of extraordinary moral integrity and humanitarian concern is kept intact by the discourse in European politics – specifically relating to the migration crisis since it is one of the most visible, recent, and striking manifestation of this contradiction in European politics and thought. The thesis will firstly examine the genealogy of European superiority and how the notion of morality and humanitarian concern became entrenched in the EU's self-image. Thereafter, relevant aspects of the EU's modern ethos and underlying paradoxes will be depicted, followed by an overview of research findings on the discourse surrounding migration.

European Ideology: Moral Supremacy and Exceptionalism

Attitudes represent socially shared, specific opinions, while ideologies make up the entire, socially shared system of beliefs, opinions, and attitudes. A plethora of research presents several functions of ideologies, i.e. explain existing social instances, repress unfavourable perspectives, and legitimate action – mostly by distorting discourse in favour of the powerful

(Apter, 1964; Eagleton, 1991; Gerring, 1997; McClowsky, 1964; van Dijk, 2006, 2013). “The language of everyday life is the very locus of ideology” (Thompson, 1984, pp. 89–90): it is the abstract foundation for all discourse within an ideological community (Gerring, 1997) and serves as the socio-cognitive basis of a political system (van Dijk, 1995, 1997, 2006). “Dominant ideologies appear as ‘neutral’, holding on to assumptions that stay largely unchallenged. When most people in a society think alike about certain matters, or even forget that there are alternatives to the status quo, we arrive at the Gramscian concept of hegemony” (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 8). Hegemony is more than just ideology and the implicit forms of ideological control: it can be seen as the lived and experienced system of meanings and values, which builds the absolute reality for the members of a society (Çoban, 2018; R. Williams, 1977).

To allow a holistic view on the humanitarian discourse and enable a critical reading of the political discourse surrounding the migration crisis, it is necessary to include a historic look on European identity. Taking a historic approach enables a better understanding of the development of the self-perception as a normative authority about moral values and humanitarianism.

Creation of European Identity through the Other

The gradual development to the modern identity, and the sense of superiority, started in the age of Enlightenment, when the foundation for a humanistic ethical system was laid. Moreover, the philosophy became prominent that ‘human’ is not a biological fact but rather a social construct, which develops with reason and morality (M. N. Barnett, 2013b; Flockhart, 2010). It is during this period that the classification of humans along a hierarchy based on innate rationality started. This was the birth of the so-called *white man’s burden*, an early precursor of today’s humanitarianism, which coupled European superiority and humanism with a duty to improve the condition of human life for the Other, and was fulfilled by practices such as

colonialism and religious mission (Flockhart, 2006, 2010). The intellectual, cultural and economic superiority of Europe was an elementary part of European identity by the 20th century (Flockhart, 2006, 2010). These factors were the foundation on which European superiority stood and were instrumentalized to legitimize European imperialism around the world (Diez, 2005; Zielonka, 2013).

Ideological Shift to Morality and Humanitarianism

The World Wars and the following destruction of wide parts of Europe led to a shift in European self-perception and values. In the between-war years, US-American values such as democracy, international institutions and liberalism integrated into the canon of intrinsic European values. After WWII, Europe began to include a differentiation to the USA to its self-perception, e.g. welfare governance and rejection of the death penalty, and the EU, as supranational entity with its policies, values and constitution, became increasingly synonymous for a European identity (Flockhart, 2010). Lentin (2008) argues that post-war Europe has rewritten its history around humanism, in an attempt to disconnect from its own actions during and before the World Wars. This included the explicit rejection of ideas of biological races and the declaration of the racisms of the Nazi regime as a singular divergence from European values – the Self-of-past was turned into the Other-of-present (Diez, 2005). What warranted this re-write was a sanitized version of history, which either omits colonial crimes or focuses on the positive aspects of imperialism. In consequence, the identity of modern Europe can be comfortably related to notions of inherent tolerance, equality, and anti-racism. Under this assumption then, Europe is perceived as uncommon – from its political culture of democracy to its commitment to humanistic values. Lentin suggests this perception has major implications for Europe's concept of its role in the world: It "has the right […] to lead by example […]. And education is not achieved without discipline and, if needs be, punishment" (Lentin, 2010, p. 489). This can be seen as continuation of the aforementioned imperialistic principle of *white*

man's burden. The difference to the imperialistic hierarchy is the foundation on which superiority stands. Instead of biology or economic strength, morality and humanistic values now legitimize Europe's power over the Other (Flockhart, 2010).

Modern European Ethos: Narratives and Paradoxes

Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) states: "The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights […]. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality […] prevail." (2012, p. 17). The next section will illustrate key elements of the modern European identity. Humanitarianism and related central narratives and values are examined to sketch out underlying paradoxes between ideal and fact.

Institutionalized Humanitarianism and Humanitarian Governance

Humanitarianism as a theoretical concept and practice is founded on the humanist understanding that all human life is defined by dignity. This assessment is then bound to the commitment of protecting and improving the condition of human dignity through assistance and compassion (Rieff, 2003). In the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, the European Union ascribes itself to a rather narrow definition[a] regarding the provision of humanitarian aid. The consensus starts off by asserting that "humanitarian aid is a fundamental expression of the universal value of solidarity between people and a moral imperative" (The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, 2008, C25/1).

[a] In the narrow definition, humanitarianism describes the provision of emergency relief and immediate alleviation of human suffering by treating the symptoms of crisis, while ascribing to a set of principles shared among humanitarian actors. These principles are *humanity* (the main goal is the protection of human life), *neutrality* (actors are to remain neutral in hostilities), *impartiality* (actions must be based on urgency and need alone) and *independence* (actions must be independent from strategic interests). The broader definition of humanitarianism includes any activity aimed at advancing the welfare of (at-risk) human beings, extending beyond emergency relief and the aforementioned principles, since – in this view – humanitarianism also entails the prevention and treatment of root causes, which calls for political action. See M. N. Barnett (2013b); M. Barnett and Snyder (2008)

Humanitarianism has become such an institutionalized vein of the international order that the term ‘humanitarian governance’ was coined (M. N. Barnett, 2013b). It describes “the administration of human collectivities in the name of a higher moral principle that sees the preservation of life and the alleviation of suffering as the highest value of action” (Fassin, 2007, p. 151). Like other global systems of governance, it is organized by international institutions and laws. The difference is that at its core it is built upon moral values, thus, instead of working in the world of politics, it operates in the world of ethics (M. N. Barnett, 2013a, 2013b). Still, it works in the same way other governance systems do, namely through rule and power (M. N. Barnett, 2013b). Agier (2010) labels its power as totalitarian since it is „the power of life (to make live or survive) and the power of death (to let die) over the individual it considers the absolute victim” (p. 33). Humanitarian action within this system is an amalgamation of care for humanity and control over it. Care implies good intentions, but control entails interfering with the autonomy and consent of those affected. This paternalism is justified by the claim of being invested in the victims’ welfare and interests, but, realistically, exclusively altruistic behaviour in global governance systems is seldom (M. N. Barnett, 2012). As Reid-Henry (2014) asserts, Western humanitarian involvement is and has always been linked to a multitude of intentions and “thus has never been free either of ethical imperative or political taint” (p. 418).

Normative Power Europe

The perception that Europe is morally superior to the rest of the world due to its stronger commitment to moral and humanistic norms, developed into a narrative of normative power. Like the European imperialist rule, Europe’s normative rule is hegemonic. Instead of exerting power through economic or military means, it is exerted through values and ideals – and applied through a combination of sanctions and incentives (Barbé & Johansson-Nogués, 2008; Diez, 2005). *Normative power Europe* defines a discursive context in which the normative values of Europe are Eurocentrically viewed to be the right norms for all humanity and spreading these

values is the modern form of civilizing the Other (Zielonka, 2013). This Eurocentric perspective implies a historic Europe that is "technically ingenious, morally progressive and innately and permanently superior" (Flockhard, 2010, p. 790) and claims European progress is an endogenous and inevitable process. For example, issues like democracy are presented as inherently European and consistently striven for in the European past. This narrative is diffused heavily by European agents (Diez, 2005). Europe as a *force for good* and driver of stability and well-being in international, foreign policy has become a prominent notion in political discourse and European identity (Barbé & Johansson-Nogués, 2008; Bialasiewicz, 2011; Diez, 2005). The criticism surrounding this narrative is ample beyond its historical inaccuracies. Firstly, the pacifist undertones are in juxtaposition to the increasing use of military force by European actors and partners. Secondly, there is a clear tendency to inconsistency when it comes to values as well as their enforcement – internally as well as in relation to the Outside. Different foreign actors are treated discriminatorily, and certain values that are stressed in outside relationships are undermined from within. The point of friction creating inconsistency seems to be between the professed values and political, economic, and strategic interests. *Normative power Europe*, according to Diez, must be viewed from a post-structuralist point as a narrative that shapes identity of Self as well as Other. Within this narrative, the normative Other is produced through different strategies of Othering: The Other might be presented as threatening European norms, as ascribed to inferior principles, as violating universal principles or as merely different. The latter is the only approach that does not include an explicit value-judgement (Diez, 2005).

The Myth of Western Humanitarianism

Corresponding to the institutionalized definitions of humanitarian action, two strands of humanitarian discourse can be identified: The alchemical one, representing the ambition to tackle the underlying root of human suffering; and the one concerned with the alleviation of symptoms. The latter is the most salient in public discourse (M. Barnett & Weiss, 2012; Orgad

& Seu, 2014). Reid-Henry (2014) examines how the ethical part of humanitarianism gives way to the political, deducing that the narrative can be seen as a characteristic of liberalism – a "liberal diagnostic" (ibid., p. 419). Humanitarianism can limit state power by institutionalizing human rights, but also reinforces it by giving the state the authority to decide which circumstances are worthy of the label 'humanitarian crisis' and thus, action, and what response is adequate (M. N. Barnett, 2013b; Reid-Henry, 2014). An elementary component is *distance* – geographical as well as cognitive: the principle of humanitarianism is to 'save the life of the *distant stranger*'. Correspondingly, the dominant humanitarian discourse is accused of habitually othering the subject of aid (M. Barnett & Weiss, 2012; Pallister-Wilkins, 2018). Similar to the security discourse, there is an inherent discursive construction (Fairclough, 1995) of a hierarchy between *Us* and *Them*. It allows states to reinforce the ideological dichotomy between the West and the Other. This dichotomy can exist along the lines of moral vs. immoral, or benevolent saviour vs. helpless victim (Agier, 2010; M. N. Barnett, 2013b; Calhoun, 2012; Cuttitta, 2018; Perkowski, 2016; Reid-Henry, 2014). Furthermore, Western humanitarianism is applied as a tool to shield the liberal order in the West, either by containing danger outside of the Western sphere or by efficiently mitigating its influence on the liberal stability (Reid-Henry, 2014). It becomes a political decision, weighing political costs and benefits of action (Newman, 2018). The innate fluidity of the concept, comparable to security, allows for discursive re-interpretation depending on the circumstances. This, coupled with the discursive weight of the narrative, enables those in power to instrumentalize it to legitimize action and veil actual interests (Waever, 1995; Watson, 2011). Essential to the instrumentalization of the discourses is the perception of urgency (M. Barnett & Weiss, 2012; Cuttitta, 2018; A. Williams, 2010).

All in all, humanitarianism mirrors the same paradox that encircles many humanistic values: An ambiguity between politics maintaining global inequality for strategic interest and the values of solidarity and dignity; between arbitrary engagement and withdrawal based on cost-benefit-analysis; as well as between value-rationality and political instrumentalization.

Another problematic consequence of the narrative is the separation of politics and ethics (Calhoun, 2012; Orgad & Seu, 2014; Reid-Henry, 2014; A. Williams, 2010). By asserting humanitarian action is merely based on ethical and moral principles, politics is taken out of the discourse, thereby facilitating the discursive non-engagement with root causes (M. N. Barnett, 2013b).

Humanitarian Values

To exemplify the underlying paradox between the professed values and action, the following section goes into more detail on two central values in the European humanitarian discourse.

Solidarity

"Solidarity is the virtue of equals who help one another in misfortunes they are not responsible for." (Steinvorth, 2017, p. 10). Regarding the migration movements to Europe, solidarity is a key issue on the transnational level between individuals residing in and those arriving to Europe, on the intergovernmental level between Member States, and on the international level between Europe and the Outside (Knodt & Tews, 2017). Theoretically, intergovernmental solidarity on migration is enshrined in the EU Treaty (TEU, 2012). It ensures the fair sharing of the economic and administrative burden. This principle is undercut by the Dublin III Regulation, which assigns responsibility for the asylum process to the country of first entry, inevitably causing an uneven distribution of the burden (Steinvorth, 2017). Scholars argue that national-level solidarity is an inherently political issue. States calculate the cost and benefit of acts of solidarity, accounting for party politics and voting behaviour while neglecting the long-term perspective (Knodt & Tews, 2017).

Respect for Human Rights

The respect for human rights is a core element of the EU's institutional and constitutional framework. It is rooted in the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) as well as in Member States' constitutions. The conceptualization of human rights is rather ambiguous. First, there is some unclarity about whether *respect* merely implies the forbiddance of violation or rather represents the active duty to enforce and promote human rights – herein lies the basis for the "central tension lying at the heart of human rights in the EU's institutional ethos" (A. Williams, 2010, p. 114). It must also be noted that while the inspection and enforcement of human rights are highly formalized and extensive in non-EU nations, European institutions have little power within the EU. Additionally, complicating the application of their protection, the authority to assess the need for constitutional enforcement of human rights lies with the individual Member States – not with the Union. Williams interprets this ambiguous approach to human rights as a commitment to human rights through a strictly political lens which consequently enables their violation (A. Williams, 2010).

Research Questions

Based on the historical and political context laid out thus far, the present analysis will concern itself with the following main questions:

(1) How is the narrative of the European Union's exceptional humanitarianism and moral integrity constructed and/or supported in the discourse?

(2) How is the European Union's (exclusionary, militarized, delocalized) action regarding migration legitimized and/or justified in the discourse, while upholding the notion of humanitarianism and moral integrity?

Humanitarian discourse in the European migration crisis

Plenty of research has been done on how migration is framed and securitized, and refugees are de-humanized and othered by the European mass media (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017). Yet, humanitarianism has become a main lens through which the discourse and action in Europe have been framed. Following an overview of broad methods employed in the European discourse that have been shown to, on one hand, keep a perception of the own moral innocence intact, while on the other, distinguishing the *Self* from the *Other*.

Highly mediatized tragedies, like the mass drowning before the coast of Lampedusa in 2013 or the pictures of toddler Alan Kurdi in 2015, move the discourse on migration toward humanitarianism, the human plight and the urgency of its alleviation, and away from the traditional security discourse (Lilie Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; Cuttitta, 2018; Palladino & Woolley, 2018; Perkowski, 2016). The situation's urgency is apparent by the mere label 'crisis' – implying substantial danger to the status-quo. 'Crisis' also carries the notion of un-expectedness, which is now used by political actors to legitimize otherwise questionable action (Fassin, 2011; Krzyżanowski et al., 2018; B. Vollmer & Karakayali, 2018).

The routine use of humanitarian discourse by elite actors represents a discursive attempt to veil the underlying securitized interests of (1) reducing the number of migrants arriving in Europe, while (2) avoiding accountability for inhumane consequences (Cuttitta, 2018; Fassin, 2007; Pace, 2010; Perkowski, 2016). Contrary to what the humanitarian veil might suggest, humanitarian operations within the security framework mostly have consequences violating human rights (Cuttitta, 2018), e.g. breaches of non-refoulement or abuse in detention centres (Amnesty International, 2020a, 2020b). Security-oriented policies and actors are discursively framed as having a humanitarian purpose – for example, the increased militarization of the sea border, its discursive purpose being the deterrence and/or apprehension of smugglers committing human rights abuses (Colombo, 2018); or the supposedly developmental

cooperation with North African countries, aimed at reducing the number of deaths at sea by minimizing the number of migrants ever leaving the African continent (Berry et al., 2016; Cuttitta, 2018). Thus, the formerly clear line between humanitarianism and security disintegrates.

Delocalization is fundamental for the avoidance of responsibility for the inhuman consequences of exclusion (Cuttitta, 2018; Perkowski, 2016). Delocalization of the crisis can occur as internalization by locating the issue in a first-entry state, as externalization by focusing on humanitarian deficiency in origin and/or transit countries or as extra-territorialization by locating the problem in international waters or any responsibility-free zone – this can be done discursively or through actual policy (Cuttitta, 2018; Mitsilegas, 2010; Pallister-Wilkins, 2015). It maintains the European self-perception as humanitarian "force for good" (Bialasiewicz, 2011, p. 300) while institutionally outsourcing morally questionable action and legal responsibility to actors that fit the 'preferred model' of European moral superiority (Cuttitta, 2018; Perkowski, 2016). Another discursive instrument used to keep the humanitarian identity intact, is highlighting of the inclusionary action taken in the name of humanitarianism. 'Inclusionary' because, in some instances, humanitarian action might go beyond what is legally/morally required – or presented as such (Cuttitta, 2018). Within the context of emergency, such 'acts of solidarity' reinforce Europe's moral superiority. The rarity of real solidarity acts is proof of the hypocrisy and symbolic nature of such action (B. A. Vollmer, 2017; B. Vollmer & Karakayali, 2018). The arbitrariness of such isolated action also fortifies the asymmetrical relationship between those aided and Europe. In the migration crisis, Europe is the paternalistic figure, acting out of good-will and holding power over migrants' lives, while the migrants are depicted as agency-less and dependent on support (Lilie Chouliaraki, 2012). This corresponds to findings from framing research on the topic, where the victimization of migrants is widely applied in their media representations (L. Chouliaraki et al., 2017; Eberl et al., 2018; Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017; Hadj Abdou, 2020).

Method and Data

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a method consists of a combination of a philosophical component - relating to social issues of ideology, power, hegemony - and a linguistic component (Davis, 1985; Fairclough, 1995; Mogashoa, 2014). CDA is essentially tasked with uncovering the subtle meanings within discourse to interpret what perspective of reality is transmitted through it. As a result, CDA shines a light on how public, mass discourse shapes the public's frame of mind by making certain ideas, interpretations and opinions available and thus, influences the public's attitude toward an issue (Gerbner, 1985; McGregor, 2010; Mogashoa, 2014). CDA makes apparent the devices used in text to position and manipulate (Lucke, 1996). Of special importance are the hidden ideological presuppositions, cultural conventions and codes within discourse (Davis, 1985; Fairclough, 1995; McGregor, 2010; van Dijk, 2006). CDA's focal point is the nexus of text, discursive practice, and social structures and making the obscure relationships between these concepts transparent (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Fairclough, 1995). Overall, the framework is grounded in the relation between text and context (Abdi & Basarati, 2016; Fairclough, 1995; Kuo & Nakamura, 2005; van Dijk, 2013; Youssefi et al., 2013).

Since the present study is concerned with European identity and ideology relating to the migration crisis, the method applied relies mostly on the approaches put forth by Wodak (2009) and van Dijk (1985, 1995). The discourse-historical and socio-cognitive approaches of CDA are frequently and successfully used in the study of discourse of biased ideologies, analysing the hegemonic relation between in- and out-groups: "It is a truism of anthropology and psychology that perception of others is part of the process of the construction of the self" (Woolf, p. 55). The beginning of extra-European travel, the rise of literacy and democratized information, increased knowledge about non-European civilizations. The knowledge and perceptions about Others fortify a sense of Self, by virtue of distinction (Woolf, 2012). "The

qualities attributed to the collective Other were the inverse of those of the European Self" (Wolff, p. 60). Similarly, Flockhart (2006, 2010) argues that the Other defines the Self by embodying what the Self is not, or does not want to be. Additionally, Flockhart (2006) defines the Significant Self as the ideal of Self that is striven for and glorified by the in-group. This triad and the discursive relations between are the overarching viewpoint of the analysis.

The research done through the lens of discourse-historical and socio-cognitive CDA resulted in a variety of analytical categories relevant for operationalization. As KhosraviNik (2010) illustrates, which categories and linguistic devices are selected for a specific study is dependent on research questions, social context, theoretical background and so forth. Based on the backdrop of the study, and the analytical tools provided by Wodak and van Dijk (2000), van Dijk (1995, 1998), the systemization provided by KhosraviNik (2010) and van Dijk's blueprint on political discourse analysis (1997), the current analysis focuses on discursive categories and methods answering following questions: Which actors are present in the discourse and how are they characterized? Which actions and values are associated to each actor group? How are actors and actions legitimized or invalidated through which arguments? Specific linguistic devices and structures are ideological squaring (van Dijk, 1998), mitigation and hyperbole, transitivity, agentiviation, and more. Being that CDA is concerned with the relationship between text, discourse and social context, the analysis will answer the research questions by generally "[moving] back and forth between critical textual, topics and macro-structural analysis and attempt to establish how (micro) linguistic mechanisms […] feed into (or fit into) a prejudiced macro-structure" (KhosraviNik 2010, p. 62). The overarching macro-structure is inferred and revolves around the European narrative of humanitarianism. The analysis will specifically focus on discursive methods constructing narratives of securitization, normative power, and moral innocence. Following the descriptive analysis, the study will try to relate the findings to the discursive as well as socio-political context, as suggested in DHA (Wodak, 2009).

The corpus of the study consists of 56 speeches (Table 1) by high-ranking representatives of the European Commission during the period of 01.01.2015 to 31.12.2019 – loosely corresponding the timeframe from when the migration crisis became a salient issue to the end of the EU legislative term. The speeches were purposefully chosen from the Press Corner database of the European Commission[b], as it represents the executive branch of the EU. As a first step, "humanitarianism", "border", "refugees" and "migration" were applied as search words. Searching only for *Speeches* and *Statements*, it resulted in 169 documents. Going through that sample, speeches were picked out that focused specifically and primarily on the migration crisis and European response, discounting duplicates. Unsurprisingly, due to the salience development of the topic, most speeches are from 2015 (21) and 2016 (21), clearly dominating 2017 (6), 2018 (3) and 2019 (5). The final texts are viewed as one aggregated body in the analysis, thus temporal variety, changing speakers and speaking events are neglected – all represent the European Commission's public stance toward migration.

It is important to note that the author got acquainted with the corpus in a preliminary reading before assembling the final corpus and doing the analysis. This enabled the creation of an issue- and discourse-specific code structure, which facilitated a more focused, deeper analysis. Moreover, the result section does not depict an exhaustive account of rhetoric devices and discursive themes that fit the research questions. As for the research questions, it should be recognized that, as this is a qualitative study revolving around a complex issue, the questions as well as the respective results overlap and are intercorrelated.

[b] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/advancedsearch/en

Analysis and Results

RQ1: How is the narrative of the European Union's exceptional humanitarianism and moral integrity constructed and/or supported in the discourse?

To answer RQ1 it is necessary to first analyse where the line between *Self* and *Other* is drawn in the discourse. Reason for this is that a moral and humanitarian EU can only exist through separation from an immoral, less humanitarian Other (Flockhart, 2006; Woolf, 2012). Therefore, the first result section will briefly depict the main actors represented in the discourse. The following part will go in depth into how the ideological community of the i*n-group* (the EU) is conceived, focusing on the Self and what the Self strives to represent in reference to humanitarian values and morality. As a last step to answer RQ1, the section will look at how the Other(s) is depicted, what characteristics are transmitted through the discourse, how the relations between Self and Other is constructed and how that shapes the frame surrounding the in-group. Briefly summarized, the analysis identified four main actor groups in the political discourse: 1) the European Union comprised of supranational institutions, EU citizens and Member States, 2) non-EU countries representing origin or transit countries, 3) the refugees and migrants and 4) the networks of human traffickers.

In-Grouping - The birth of the Union, European values, and duties

In the construction of a sense of unity within the in-group, the analysis identified two prevailing, intertwined but distinct, themes in the discourse. The less common, but highly affective theme would be the historical reference to the *birth of the Union*. Essential here is not the foundation of the Union itself but rather the differences in the European way of life and values before and after. Speakers highlight the harsh realities of pre-unification Europe – a "field of conflicts, combats, divisions and rivalries"[3] –, while cautioning against indifference to

[3] 27.11.2017

that past. This gap created between Self-of-Past and Self coincides with what Diez (2005) and Lentin (2008) posit is an attempt to cognitively distance the EU from crimes committed and problematic concepts. Simultaneously, while summoning the "bad memories of the European past"[4] to the audience's mind, the purpose and gains of unification are professed in the discourse, i.e., "the [EU] is a reconciliation process"[5], "[the EU provided] us 60 years of peace, stability and progress"[6]. Although this theme does not specifically create a humanitarian frame around the EU, it can be seen as a first step to unify the in-group by pointing out shared (historical) genetics. Furthermore, this narrative is a prelude to the Significant Self. By highlighting how standards such as "peace", "stability" and "progress"[7] have been brought to the continent by unification, the EU as an entity is cognitively equated to these ideals.

The second theme, which represents a strategy to create an explicit moral and humanitarian cloak around the EU, is that of *European values and duties*. This theme can be viewed as the discursive construction of the Significant Self. Unsurprisingly, *solidarity* is the most frequent ideal in the discourse, next to *responsibility*. These two principles are presented as the basis for European action in migration, and more specifically in the development of a European migration policy: "reform our Common European Asylum System based on the principles of responsibility and solidarity"[8]. Liberty, equality, openness and tolerance are other ideals presented as inherently *European values*, analogous to what Lentin posited (2008, p. 489). Separate but connected to these values are the EU's moral and/or humanitarian obligation, as well its legal duties. When the text revolves around migration to Europe in general, the speakers centre on universal law, e.g., "upholding the fundamental rights and freedoms of all migrants"[9], "refugees will receive […] protection according to international

[4] 04.11.2015
[5] 30.08.2017
[6] 11.09.2019
[7] Ibid.
[8] 20.06.2018
[9] 17.12.2017

law"[10]. As for the EU's moral obligation, it appears in explicit ("we have a moral obligation and humanitarian duty to act"[11]) as well as implicit utterances, using modal verbs expressing obligation ("We cannot turn a blind eye"[12]).

By regularly attaching all these ideals to personal pronouns such as 'we' / 'our', or to utterances such as "shared" / "sharing of" / "common"[13], and by placing these values "at the heart of our European Agenda on Migration"[14], the discourse cements the notion that the EU is as entity is inseparable from these ideals. All in all, these ideals represent the image Europe wants to create and uphold, – "the continent of solidarity"[15], "people viewed Europe as a beacon for human rights"[16], "a source of stability in a time of crisis"[17]. This matches the notion of European moral exceptionalism. These two themes represent the construction of the in-group inward – its (positive) characteristics and commonalities. But since migration is an issue that deepened cleavages between the EU and (some) Member States, as well as between Member States themselves (Knodt & Tews, 2017; Steinvorth, 2017), these narratives of shared history and ideals can also be viewed as an emotive attempt to cancel out differences and refocus on a common origin.

The Other within: Member States, nationalism, and xenophobia

The discourse attempts to frame these ideals as, on the one hand, being constitutive of Europe while, on the other hand, also being lacking in practice. This is where the discourse highlights a rift between the EU as a supranational, normative entity and the Member States as executive entities. The separation is more pronounced discursively when the discourse revolves around image-damaging events in Europe. The text then asserts the EU's humanitarian concern

[10] 04.09.2015
[11] 22.01.2017
[12] 19.02.2015
[13] 16.12.2016, 14.01.2016, 11.09.2019
[14] 17.12.2017
[15] Ibid.
[16] 29.11.2016
[17] 03.03.2016

by implicating or accusing national entities of disregard for humanitarian commitments and ideals, thereby othering internal elements. Here, the EU oftentimes takes on the role of parent figure. This can be the case for definite action in migration management or for more abstract ideals the EU wants to be seen as representing (e.g., "any form of violence against refugees and migrants is unacceptable", "strongly condemn all forms […] of intolerance", "voices calling for a national, isolationist approach"[18]). This cognitive distinction might seem surprising but proves effective in shifting blame away from the supranational to the national executive or abstract – a specific form of delocalization of responsibility. Apart from clearing responsibility from the EU for deficits in migration management, the displayed contempt for attitudes such as xenophobia, as well as isolationism and nationalism, can be viewed as an effort to cognitively label them as un-European – similarly to the attitudes of pre-unification Europe. Altogether, this can be seen as a less typical form of ideological squaring, since it is directed inward, but works with the same mechanism: Highlighting the positive characteristics of the (Significant) Self by distinction to the Other (van Dijk, 1998).

The distant Other

In the quest to present Europe as extraordinary in its humanitarian and moral concern, the discourse also applies Ideological Squaring (van Dijk, 1998) to distant, external Others. As mentioned aforehand, three relevant out-groups can be identified: the refugees, the non-European Outside, and smuggling networks. Unsurprisingly, the discourse repeatedly and prominently includes reference to EU humanitarian action conforming with the definition of humanitarian action from the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. Included are specific action taken, like the provision of aid in camps and donations, as well as more abstract action as offering protection. One exemplary passage:

[18] 14.11.2019, 02.02.2016, 11.09.2019

"*Protecting the rights of migrants and refugees and improving their situation inside and outside the EU is at the heart of our European agenda. The [EU] is the number one donor of humanitarian aid, taking action to provide lifesaving emergency aid to refugees: last year alone the European Commission gave more than €1 billion to helping refugees, internally displaced people and protecting child migrants outside the [EU]. The [EU] is also strongly engaged through its presence in the Mediterranean and Aegean Sea and has helped to save more than 400.000 lives since the beginning of last year. We are also the largest development donor and work tirelessly to create a better future for migrants around the world*."[19]

As a swath of research on European media discourse surrounding refugees has already shown (Lilie Chouliaraki, 2012; Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017; Krzyżanowski et al., 2018; Palladino & Woolley, 2018; Triandafyllidou, 2018), refugees are consistently victimized and stripped of individuality – this is also the case in the analysed corpus. In relation to this out-group, the EU is presented as "place of refuge"[20] and "their last line of defence"[21], a destination pursued or its lauded tradition of peace, freedom, and human rights. One instance indicative of this is a speech where a refugee is singled out and cited as "[expecting] the European Union and its Member States to protect her human rights, and [recalling] that in her country people viewed Europe as a beacon for human rights"[22]. This utterance shifts the humanitarian image from being merely self-ascribed to assigned. This is also the only instance in the corpus where a single refugee is named, and her background articulated – possibly to give the quote a stronger credibility. Furthermore, a sense of outstanding morality is created by highlighting the deliberate inclusionary action the EU takes. This action can be either EU-internal resettlement of refugees from camps or the commitment to "open up legal channels"[23]. All this action is voluntary as it is not legally required. This is in line with prior research asserting how

[19] 16.12.2016
[20] Ibid.
[21] 29.11.2016
[22] Ibid.
[23] 20.05.2015

inclusionary action is highlighted although it represents the arbitrariness and power hierarchy between refugees and the EU – one actor decides on life or death of the other (Agier, 2010; Cuttitta, 2018; B. A. Vollmer, 2017; B. Vollmer & Karakayali, 2018). Moreover, even though the EU can pronounce inclusionary action to be a priority, it is after all dependent on the Member States – where blame for non-implementation of pledges can be easily directed at.

As for the extra-European neighbourhood, the discourse subtly distinguishes between origin and transit countries and cognitively contrasts both to the EU. Origin countries are characterized as incapable to care to the own population, war-torn, "plagued by conflicts" and defined by "explosive instability"[24]. The references to these countries seldomly go into more detail than, for example, "war in Syria, the terror of Islamic State in Libya or dictatorship in Eritrea"[25]. The discourse places "addressing the root causes"[26] of migration or "bringing stability where there is conflict"[27] at the centre of European interests in regard to these countries, thereby superficially touching on the political aspect of humanitarianism (M. N. Barnett, 2013b; M. Barnett & Snyder, 2008). The relevance of this is argued in part as self-serving way to stem the flow entering Europe as well as humanitarian concern for the lives of people in the region: "For as long as there is war and hardship in our neighbourhood […], people will continue to seek a safe haven on European shores"[28], "With these efforts we can collectively improve the lives of so many human beings"[29]. The discourse highlights EU humanitarian action to strengthen the region: references to the Trust Fund for Africa, the European Neighbourhood Policy and other diplomatic channels are manifold. Cognitively as well as rhetorically, the importance of European involvement in the region is highlighted (e.g., "the trusted role Europe plays in these conflicts"[30], "the EU will […] implement the commitments it made at the [World

[24] 30.08.2017, 20.02.2016
[25] 25.09.2015
[26] 16.12.2016
[27] 20.06.2018
[28] 19.04.2015
[29] 19.06.2016
[30] 30.08.2017

Humanitarian Summit], including on political leadership to prevent and end conflict"[31]). As Barnett (2013b) indicated though, the discourse does not truly engage with root causes and complexities, except to underline European humanitarian concern, thus, serving the narrative.

The transit countries take on a less prominent role in the discourse, but further advance the preferred narrative. These countries are closer to or on the European continent, and therefore have closer diplomatic, economic, or cultural ties. The discourse does not characterize them as intrinsically unsafe or instable but rather as inadequately handling the refugee situation, i.e., Bosnia and Herzegovina, Western Balkans, or Libya. Here, the discourse scarcely details the situation of refugees, referring to accusations of human rights abuses or illegal acts such as refoulement. The texts strictly condemn the behaviour, call on actors to improve (e.g., "We expect Bosnia and Herzegovina will take urgent measures to avoid further deterioration"[32]) and show how the EU is helping in that respect (e.g. "The [EU] [supports] the Libyan authorities in developing solutions to create safe and dignified alternatives"[33]). How the discourse distinguishes between origin and transit countries also confirms the arbitrariness of European humanitarianism depending on political necessity (Diez, 2005).

The discursive construction of the non-EU countries can be seen as a classic example of ideological squaring, where the negative of the Other is accentuated, implicitly or explicitly underlining the positive of the Self. A clear hierarchy is constructed, with the EU taking the moral, political, and governmental higher ground and normative leadership, in line with the perspective laid out by – among others – Zielonka (2013), Barbé & Johansson-Nogués (2008) and Bialasiewicz (2011). All these countries are discursively labelled as lacking in concern for fundamental rights and humanitarianism towards refugees, as well as and inapt to secure the wellbeing of their own populations. Europe therefore has to step in with development and

[31] 19.06.2016
[32] 14.11.2019
[33] 26.07.2019

humanitarian aid, as "it is the right thing to do outside Europe for moral reasons. To help the most vulnerable."[34] Similarly, the relation to migrant bodies is marked by utterances of how the EU is saving, protecting, and offering a better life to migrants, internally and across the neighbourhood. By differentiation with the out-group(s), as well as by highlighting how the EU is attempting to alleviate human suffering of the distant Other, the EU's humanitiarian superiority is constructed. This, on top of the discursive, cognitive linkage of the EU with humanistic values, can be seen as an in-depth answer to research question 1.

Leaning on many scholars who evaluated European action surrounding the refugee crisis and how it is framed in politics and the media, this study works under the presupposition that the paramount priority of European actors is the minimization of migrant bodies reaching the EU (Cuttitta, 2018; Fassin, 2007; Pace, 2010; Perkowski, 2016). This goal stands in opposition to the moral ideal the EU aspires to represent which includes universally protecting human rights and freedoms, as well as the (supposedly) Christian value of helping the vulnerable. RQ1 focused on how this ideal is perpetuated and made into an inherent characteristic of the EU in the discourse. As described in the literature review, the action taken by the EU towards refugees, especially on the European border and outside of it, is deeply securitized and militarized. Through RQ2 the discourse is screened for how the humanitarian ideal, and the contradictory action taken are harmonized – that is, how the action which violates the ideal is presented as an imperative and legitimized in such a matter as to mitigate the harm done, or even further cement the moral superiority.

[34] 30.08.2017

RQ2: How is the European Union's action regarding migration legitimized and/or justified in the discourse, while upholding the notion of humanitarianism and moral integrity?

As a first step, the study zooms in on utterances explicitly laying out the EU's objectives and how humanitarian/moral values and exclusionary intentions are semantically reconciled. Thereafter, this next section will look at how the militarization of the European border and the cooperation with problematic international partners are justified or excused as means to a moral end, and finally, how the explicit exclusion of migrant bodies is presented as necessary and right in the interest of the in-group.

Equating Management to Humanitarianism

Three exemplary passages that give an insight into the discursive strategy to reconciliate contradictory action and ideals are the following[35]:

*"Our **main goal is to save lives and ensure protection** of those in need, in a humane and responsible way. **Managing migration** better means addressing the drivers of migration, ensuring better management of our external borders, and working with the international community to address challenges together. The European Union, with its **commitment to international law and to European values**, is creating an asylum system in Europe that is more humane, fair and efficient." (Highlights by the author)*

*"It is indeed critical for Europe to uphold its moral and human duty, **while at the same time** to have in place a solid, sustainable, future-proof and fair Asylum system." (Highlights by the author)*

[35] 16.12.2016, 15.01.2019, 20.02.2016

"But our humanitarian efforts and the better management of our borders are ***two sides of the same coin****." (Highlights by the author)*

Generally, in these utterances the speech act does not provide detail about neither humanitarian nor securitized/exclusionary action, but rather remains abstract and vague. This allows to create a simple, cognitive connection and even equation between the two. The passages also point to the EU's interest in a system that is "solid", "efficient" and "sustainable"[36], while also highlighting the adherence to "international law and to European values"[37], reaffirming the EU's (self-)image as committed to humanistic values. These passages though do not identify who the beneficiary of these characteristics of the system will be. While it could be assumed to be aimed at the refugees, the more plausible target audience are the Member States – keeping in mind the audience, which does not include refugees. The text is reassuring national entities that firstly, the EU is aware that excessive migration destabilizes the internal status quo, and it is managing its reduction, and secondly it is invested in fair distribution among the Member States.

Humanitarian Purpose: Militarization and Financial Support

The discourse applies several argumentative strategies to frame the militarized action on the European border, including the cooperation with law enforcement from transit countries, as morally just and to the humanitarian benefit of refugees. This is in line with past research and theory, which claims militarized action is veiled in humanitarian purpose (Cuttitta, 2018; Fassin, 2007; Pace, 2010; Pallister-Wilkins, 2015; Perkowski, 2016; Waever, 1995; Watson, 2011). The previously suggested out-group of criminal networks trafficking refugees becomes pertinent here. This is another out-group whose action and values the EU can contrast itself by

[36] 15.01.2019, 16.12.2016
[37] Ibid.

– it is repeatedly and harshly condemned as immoral, abusive, and disregarding of human life. This group represents the immoral antagonist to the EU's humanitarian action. References to this out-group oftentimes include a straight-forward victimization of refugees: "the criminal networks that often take advantage of people's despair"[38]. Militarizing internal and external border agencies is presented as a clear way to "free [migrants] from the smugglers and their deathly trade"[39] – a goal which is frequently referred to as central in the EU's action plan.

The second, cognitively even more powerful argument is the explicit saving of lives. Consistently, when the speech revolves around the EU's engagement in strengthening, training, or financing border agencies and coast guards, the discourse points to how that action enables the agencies to save lives – frequently it even goes into specifics as to how many migrants were saved over a specific period of time. The frequent use of the term *search and rescue operations* further solidifies the humanitarian purpose of the agencies. Following a selection of exemplary passages[40]:

"We continue training the [Libyan Coastguard] to enhance its capacity to carry out searches and rescue operations at sea, which has so far resulted in 16,000 migrants rescued."

"[…] creation of a European Border and Coast Guard, which would have enough resources to step in and prevent crises from developing at our borders." (Referring to migrants drowning at Sea)

By highlighting the plight inflicted on refugees and the potential to prevent imminent death, the activity and empowerment of border agencies become cloaked in urgency – justifying all means necessary, corresponding to insights by Vollmer & Karakayali (2018), Krzyzanowski et al. (2018) and Fassin (2011). Interestingly, the humanitarian contribution made by non-

[38] 17.12.2017
[39] 15.04.2016
[40] 13.06.2018, 20.02.2016

governmental rescue missions is not once mentioned in the discourse. Neither are the reports of negligence by European operations or illegal activity by the Libyan coast guard explicitly referred to. However, the discourse sporadically alludes to the reportedly inhumane conditions and abuses in Libyan refugee camps. In these instances, the discourse bypasses how the funding of the Libyan coast guard contributes to the situation, and instead highlights the EU's criticism of the reported situation ("We have all seen the atrocious images of the detention centres in Libya. It's a disgrace for the whole world"[41]) and how the EU is advancing the resettlement out of Libya – mostly back to the home country, i.e. "[…] accelerate the assisted voluntary returns to countries of origin for those stranded in Libya", "We have helped more than 25000 migrants to leave Libya."[42] Here, the discourse manages to omit the EU's responsibility for those stranded in Libya, while accentuating the EU's humanitarianism in getting people out – this can be viewed as a clear method to delocalize responsibility for inhuman consequences of European policy, as shown by Cuttitta (2018) and Perkowski ((2016).

Justifying Exclusionary Action by Criminalizing and Creating Threat Condition

Even though the focus of the discourse lies with the positive action taken by the EU, the discourse also refers to action that explicitly excludes refugees – which is in line with the political goal of the in-group. The analysis found two principal rhetorical strategies which combined create a cognitive structure of the issue of migration that implicitly validates the expulsion and exclusion of refugees. First off, although refugees and migrants are usually an agency-less, victimized out-group when it comes to humanitarian action, in some instances the group is divided into passive, deserving victim, and acting, deceitful criminal. Some passages are rather direct in the othering between refugee groups, e.g.

[41] 11.09.2019
[42] 17.12.2017, 13.06.2018

"[…] reform our asylum system to be able to better offer protection to ***those who really need it*** *for as long as they need it, whilst limiting abuses, secondary movements and asylum shopping. This of course also means returning to their home countries* ***those migrants who crossed our borders illegally*** *and are not in need or protection".*[43] *(Highlights by the author)*

The second discursive strategy is the comprehensive, encompassing manufacturing of a threat condition throughout the discourse. This is done through a variety of lexical and rhetorical devices, ranging from proximation to securitization of migration. Even though the crisis is seldomly referred to as happening on EU soil and when it is, the Member States are blamed for inappropriate treatment of refugees as laid (see RQ1), the discourse still tries to create an arch from the migratory movements as cause and the imminent danger to the EU as effect. As outlined in the theory, securitization is the predominant frame surrounding the migration crisis in the news media (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017), although it is veiled by humanitarianism in political discourse (Lilie Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; Palladino & Woolley, 2018) – this corresponds to the findings in the present study. The securitization appears in the form of overly drastic and alarming vocabulary used to describe the threat and possible damage to societal and ideological values if not implemented, e.g.,[44]

"Our society is built on certain premises of ***organised solidarity that would be undermined*** *if we simply would say that everybody can come in", "Migration has become a* ***challenge for our unity****", "[Migration] creates* ***tensions within our societies****", "the situation ended up* ***testing the very foundations*** *of the [EU]", "the future of Europe is* ***at stake****", "The internal market* ***will not survive*** *the refugee crisis if we do not manage to secure our external borders jointly". (Highlights by the author).*

[43] 11.09.2019
[44] 04.09.2015, 13.06.2018, ibid., 20.02.2016, 21.06.2018, 03.03.2016

This rhetorical argumentation implies that the civic issues the EU faces, such as declining societal coherence or the rise of nationalism, are direct effects of migration. This disregards political trends and crises from long before 2015, e.g., Euroscepticism and the financial crisis. This forceful terminology insinuates an attack – which converts the EU into the defensive actor, left with no choice but to shield itself. This sense of being under attack and having to prioritize the in-group's security is further accentuated by the subtle but reoccurring rhetorical intersection of migration and terrorism. Here, two distinct issues are mentioned jointly as separate priorities for the EU, invoking the collective trauma caused by terrorism and cognitively fusing it with the issue of migration, e.g.,[45]

"the arrival of the first migrant boats […] almost coincided with the first jihadi terrorist attacks on European soil." or *"along with the measures to reinforce our borders, we had to also face a mounting threat from terrorism".*

Essentially, to answer RQ2, the discourse uses the EU's proclaimed humanitarianism and morality as the reason for its activities in the neighbourhood and Mediterranean, as well as the reason for why it cannot include all refugees: 1) treating genuine and non-deserving refugees equally would undermine the integrity of the system, and 2) European values a way of life based on freedom and rule of law are dependent on inner stability and security – which are threatened by the volume of migration to Europe. In sum, merging the results of both research questions, "getting [migration policy] right, for the long term, it is in the interest of our citizens, in the interest of our countries, the cohesion of our societies, and the wellbeing of all those on the move and the communities they leave behind"[46]. This quote is representative of the priorities set by the European Union and where the victims of the humanitarian crisis de facto rank in relation to internal, political considerations.

[45] 11.09.2019, 20.02.2016
[46] 20.02.2019

Conclusion

"The main danger for the EU lies in its self-congratulatory and self-centred debate along the old lines of 'Europe is doing good for the entire world'" (Mayer, 2008, p. 64). The statement stands a decade later: The study provided a rhetoric-driven, qualitative insight into how European ideology and discourse have not evolved as one would have expected and hoped.

The European political discourse clearly seeks to brand the EU as a major humanitarian actor, with an impeccable performance regarding humanistic values. In the few instances where the discourse points to faults in the European answer to migration, it is unambiguous in distinguishing between the Union and internal outliers, thus, clearing the Union's coat from misbehaviour. The study supports findings from frame and media research as well as on European discourse, demonstrating how the EU is foremost concerned with discursively maintaining a humanitarian appearance, while promoting securitized and exclusionary policy. The EU is equated with moral integrity and construed as a champion for the conditions of human life everywhere. Humanitarianism is presented as the main objective of the migration policy and all action entailed. Simultaneously, it is utilized to legitimize the un-humanitarian action and effects perpetuated by the EU and its partners. This contradiction is muddied by the geographical and cognitive delocalization of human suffering and the responsibility for it to non-European Others, i.e., origin countries unable to keep peace and achieve prosperity, transit states disregarding humanistic values and refugees' rights, or human smugglers exploiting and abusing refugees – all three out-groups are responsible for the death and suffering along the European border.

Persistence of Old Ideological Patterns and Politization of Humanitarianism

More broadly, the analysis shows that the EU has barely moved on from problematic and old-set patterns of European identity. The discourse manifests an EU that, on one hand, takes an unhistorical approach to its own history, while, on the other, maintains a historically

formed attitude towards its counterparts. As Diez suggested, othering and subordinating foreign countries is done in a variety of ways (2005). They are not viewed as equal – the economic, diplomatic, and governmental superiority of the EU is ubiquitous. This is displayed by repetition of financial assistance, reiteration of political incentives, as well as diplomatic interference by the EU. All of this is (allegedly) aimed at improving the other's predicament, suggesting the Other is not capable of it on its own. Similarly, the self-perception of the EU as a *normative power* (Barbé & Johansson-Nogués, 2008; Diez, 2005) is palpable. This imbalance of power is cognitively legitimized by the extraordinary moral and humanistic standards of the EU, which are written off from other countries. The moral exceptionalism is akin to the (historical) exceptionalism that Trentz (2014) recognized in political framing. It is an exceptionalism that stems, as Lentin (2008, p. 489) points out, from a sterilized version of history: Apart from the vague and mostly disassociated mentions of the conflict in Europe before and during the World Wars, the discourse completely omits crimes and injustices committed by Europe on the African continent, which would counter the notion of inherent moral integrity. Never is the constructed inferiority of foreign countries or the duty to receive refugees attributed to European imperialism and its consequences today. What the EU does concerning African countries and the people fleeing, is fully construed as being out of European goodwill and humanitarianism – cementing the self-ascribed role as international *force for good* (Barbé & Johansson-Nogués, 2008). The omittance of past and modern crimes and exploitation, combined with the humanitarian veil shrouding migration policy, can be seen as the discursive operationalization of the ideological element of *innocence of modernity* (Dussel et al., 2000; Poole, 2012). All this is the groundwork for the all-encompassing European paternalism in reference to the non-European – be it a migrant body or foreign nation. The gross power imbalance and consequently warranted normative and political authority can only be viewed as the ideological continuation of *white man's burden* and imperialistic inequality.

Accompanying these discursively transmitted, ideological structures of superiority, exceptionality and innocence, the discourse also depicts an EU that views the world from a persistently Eurocentric and self-centred perspective. The parallel but different victimization of refugees and refugees-receiving countries is important to note. As described in the result section, refugees are presented as agent-less, to-be-saved victims. But the discourse does not offer genuine sympathy for their plight or background. Usually, refugees' struggles are only mentioned as a justification for increased enforcement of European borders or as a means to underline European humanitarianism or to denounce another actor. In contrast, receiving countries are discursively treated with compassion, presented as neglected by as well as standing up for the Union. In one speech[47], the governments of Austria and Germany are praised for their efforts and generous reception, despite the challenges they face, and presented as commendable example of European values. This matches the direction values such as solidarity and responsibility take in the discourse – they are usually directed inwards: Solidarity between Member States, responsibility for the stability of the Union through support for first-entry countries. The Eurocentricism is further detectable in the text passages claiming a threat to the Union. When the discourse speaks of the danger to European values and social cohesion, one must be aware of the target audience: political figures within the EU, not refugees or origin countries. Thus, in line with theory by Reid-Henry, it can be inferred that the main imperative is to protect the internal political status quo (2014, p. 418) – with little concern for the Other. As pointed out by Barnett (2012), humanitarian action is a combination of care and control. The analysis shows how apparent care for the inferior or impotent Other veils self-interested control: Every action taken – from militarizing the border to guiding the action of foreign countries through funding and training – is a means of control over the Other. The fact that this asserted 'care' and the underlying 'European values' are wielded through control

[47] 07.09.2015

only when the consequences of non-action upset the Eurocentric order, proves the falsity of the claimed concern for human life as the main driver. As indicated in the theory for the values of solidarity (Steinvorth, 2017) and respect for human rights (Knodt & Tews, 2017), EU humanitarianism has become a mere ideal, applied through an arbitrary and political lens.

The findings and underlying inferences that can be made about the EU's self-perception and attitude toward the out-groups is alarming coming from the European Commission – the helm of European policy, whose talking points and cognitive frames trickle down to national politics and media and thus, the European public. By trying to maintain a humanitarian image, it also maintains imperialistic ideology and the corresponding hierarchy in the European collective mind.

Limitations and Future Research

As qualitative research goes, the results of this study are somewhat susceptible to the author's own thinking and ideological bias. Moreover, qualitative studies in CDA are interdisciplinary and usually do not follow a strict rule book, applying a variety of analytical tools and vantage points depending on the issue at hand, the study background and the author's research interest. This complicates replicability. The author tried to lessen the impact of this by sticking to well-established rhetorical strategies and ideological notions. Also, by focusing on elite political discourse, the study replicates hegemonial prioritization. For future research, it could be compelling to compare the elite discourse to the discourse on the same issue coming from the respective Other, i.e., origin countries or refugee organizations, or from side-lined European actors, such as NGOs and private rescue missions. It could also yield interesting results to see which of the identified discursive structures can be found in national news media, or where national media differs from the supranational.

References

Abdi, R., & Basarati, A. (2016). A Critical Analysis of the Representation of Yemen Crisis in Ideologically-Loaded Newspaper Headlines. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, *16*(3), 37–52.

Agier, M. (2010). Humanity as an Identity and Its Political Effects (A Note on Camps and Humanitarian Government). *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism and Developments*, *1*(1), 29–45.

Amnesty International. (2020a). *'Between life and death': Refugees and migrants trapped in Libya's cycle of abuse*. https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE1930842020ENGLISH.pdf

Amnesty International. (2020b). *Caught in a political game: Asylum-seekers and migrants on the Greece/Turkey border pay the price for Europe's failures*. https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/EUR0120772020ENGLISH.PDF

Apter, D. E. (1964). Ideology and Discontent. *Ideology and Discontent*, 15–46.

Barbé, E., & Johansson-Nogués, E. (2008). The EU as a Modest 'Force for Good': The European Neighbourhood Policy. *International Affairs*, *84*(1), 81–96.

Barnett, M., & Snyder, J. (2008). The grand strategies of humanitarianism. In M. Barnett & T. Weiss (Eds.), *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics* (pp. 143–171). Cornell University Press.

Barnett, M., & Weiss, T. (Eds.). (2012). *Humanitarianism in Question*. Cornell University Press. https://doi.org/10.7591/9780801461538

Barnett, M. N. (2012). International paternalism and humanitarian governance. *Global Constitutionalism*, *1*(3), 485–521. https://doi.org/10.1017/S2045381712000135

Barnett, M. N. (2013a). *Empire of humanity: A history of humanitarianism* (1. printing). *Cornell paperbacks History/world, political science*. Cornell Univ. Press.

Barnett, M. N. (2013b). Humanitarian Governance. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *16*(1), 379–398. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-012512-083711

Berry, M., Garcia-Blanco, I., & Moore, K [K.]. (2016). *Press coverage of the refugee and migrant crisis in the EU: A content analysis of five European countries.* UNHCR.

Bialasiewicz, L. (2011). Borders, above all? *Political Geography*, *30*(6), 299–300.

Blommaert, J., & Bulcaen, C. (2000). Critical Discourse Analysis. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *29*(1), 447–466. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.29.1.447

Calhoun, C. (2012). The Imperative to Reduce Suffering: Charity, Progress, and Emergencies in the Field of Humanitarian Action. In M. Barnett & T. Weiss (Eds.), *Humanitarianism in Question* (pp. 73–97). Cornell University Press. https://doi.org/10.7591/9780801461538-005

Chouliaraki, L [L.], Georgiou, M., Zaborowski, R [R.], & Oomen, W. (2017). *Project Report: The European "migration crisis" and the media. A cross-European press content analysis*. The Resource Centre on Media Freedom in Europe. Department of Media and Communications London School of Economics and Political Science; Utrecht University.

Chouliaraki, L [Lilie]. (2012). Between pity and irony: Paradigms of refugee representation in humanitarian discourse. In K. Moore (Ed.), *Global crises and the media: Vol. 6. Migrations and the media.* Lang.

Chouliaraki, L [Lilie], & Zaborowski, R [Rafal] (2017). Voice and community in the 2015 refugee crisis: A content analysis of news coverage in eight European countries. *International Communication Gazette*, *79*(6-7), 613–635. https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048517727173

Çoban, S. (2018). Hegemony, Ideology, Media. In S. Çoban (Ed.), *Media, Ideology and Hegemony* (pp. 90–106). BRILL. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004364417_007

Colombo, M. (2018). The Representation of the "European Refugee Crisis" in Italy: Domopolitics, Securitization, and Humanitarian Communication in Political and Media Discourses. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, *16*(1-2), 161–178. https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2017.1317896

Cuttitta, P. (2018). Delocalization, Humanitarianism and Human Rights: The Mediterranean Border Between Exclusion and Inclusion. *Antipode*, *50*(3), 783–803.

Davis, H. H. (1985). Discourse and Media Influence. In T. A. van Dijk (Ed.), *Research in text theory: Vol. 10. Discourse and Communication: New approaches to the analysis of mass media discourse and communication* (Vol. 10, pp. 44–59). W. de Gruyter.

Diez, T. (2005). Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe'. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, *33*(3), 613–636.

Dussel, E., Krauel, J., & Tuma, V. (2000). Europe, Modernity, and Eurocentrism. *Nepantla: Views from South*, *1*(3), 465–478.

Eagleton, T. (1991). *Ideology: An Introduction*. Verso.

Eberl, J.-M., Meltzer, C. E., Heidenreich, T., Herrero, B., Theorin, N., Lind, F., Berganza, R., Boomgaarden, H. G., Schemer, C., & Strömbäck, J. (2018). The European media discourse on immigration and its effects: a literature review. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, *42*(3), 207–223. https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2018.1497452

Eco, U. (1976). *A theory of semiotics*. *Advances in semiotics*. Indiana University Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/j.ctt16xwcfd

European Commission. (2012). *Standard Eurobarometer 77: THE VALUES OF EUROPEANS*.

https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/eb/eb77/eb77_value_en.pdf

The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, January 30, 2008.

CONSOLIDATED VERSION OF THE TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION, 55 Official Journal of the European Union 13 (2012). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2012:326:FULL&from=EN

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: the critical study of language*. Longmann.

Fassin, D. (2007). Humanitarianism: A nongovernmental government. In M. Feher (Ed.), *Nongovernmental politics* (pp. 149–160). Zone Books.

Fassin, D. (2011). *Humanitarian Reason*. University of California Press. https://doi.org/10.1525/california/9780520271166.001.0001

Flockhart, T. (2006). 'Complex Socialization': A Framework for the Study of State Socialization. *European Journal of International Relations*, *12*(1), 89–118. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066106061331

Flockhart, T. (2010). Europeanization or EU-ization? The Transfer of European Norms across Time and Space. *Journal of Common Market Studies (JCMS)*, *48*(4), 787–810.

Gerbner, G. (1985). Mass Media Discourse: Message System Analysis as a Component of Cultural Indicators. In T. A. van Dijk (Ed.), *Research in text theory: Vol. 10. Discourse and Communication: New approaches to the analysis of mass media discourse and communication* (Vol. 10, pp. 13–25). W. de Gruyter.

Gerring, J. (1997). Ideology: A Definitional Analysis. *Political Research Quarterly*, *50*(4).

Greussing, E., & Boomgaarden, H. G. (2017). Shifting the refugee narrative? An automated frame analysis of Europe's 2015 refugee crisis. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *43*(11), 1749–1774. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1282813

Hadj Abdou, L. (2020). 'Push or pull'? Framing immigration in times of crisis in the European Union and the United States. *Journal of European Integration*, *42*(5), 643–658. https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2020.1792468

KhosraviNik, M. (2010). Actor descriptions, action attributions, and argumentation: towards a systematization of CDA analytical categories in the representation of social groups. *Critical Discourse Studies*, *7*(1), 55–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/17405900903453948

Knodt, M., & Tews, A. (2017). European Solidarity and Its Limits: Insights from Current Political Challenges. In A. Grimmel & S. M. Giang (Eds.), *Solidarity in the European Union* (pp. 47–64). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57036-5_5

Krzyżanowski, M., Triandafyllidou, A., & Wodak, R. (2018). The Mediatization and the Politicization of the "Refugee Crisis" in Europe. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, *16*(1-2), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2017.1353189

Kuo, S.-H., & Nakamura, M. (2005). Translation or transformation? A case study of language and ideology in the Taiwanese press. *Discourse & Society, 16*(3), 393–417. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926505051172

Lentin, A. (2008). Europe and the Silence about Race. *European Journal of Social Theory*, *11*(4), 487–503. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431008097008

Lucke, A. (1996). Text and Discourse Analysis. *New York: American Educational Research Association*, *21*, 3–17.

Mayer, H. (2008). Is It Still Called 'Chinese Whispers'? The EU's Rhetoric and Action as a Responsible Global Institution. *International Affairs, 84*(1), 61–79.

McClowsky, H. (1964). Consensus and Ideology in American Politics. *American Political Science Review*, *58*(June), 406–427.

McGregor, S. (2010). *Critical Discourse Analysis: A Primer*. Mount Saint Vincent University.

Mitsilegas, V. (2010). *Immigration and asylum law and policy in Europe: Vol. 21*. *Extraterritorial immigration control: Legal challenges* (B. Ryan, Ed.). Nijhoff.

Mogashoa, T. (2014). Understanding Critical Discourse Analysis in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*, *1*(7), 104–113.

Newman, E. (2018). The Limits of Liberal Humanitarianism in Europe: The 'Responsibility to Protect' and Forced Migration. *ERIS – European Review of International Studies*, *4*(2-3), 59–77. https://doi.org/10.3224/eris.v4i2-3.04

Orgad, S., & Seu, I. B. (2014). The Mediation of Humanitarianism: Toward a Research Framework. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, *7*(1), 6–36. https://doi.org/10.1111/cccr.12036

Pace, M. (2010). The European Union, security and the southern dimension. *European Security*, *19*(3), 431–444.

Palladino, M., & Woolley, A. (2018). Migration, Humanitarianism, and the Politics of Salvation. *Lit: Literature Interpretation Theory*, *29*(2), 129–144.

Pallister-Wilkins, P. (2015). The Humanitarian Politics of European Border Policing: Frontex and Border Police in Evros. *International Political Sociology*, *9*(1), 53–69. https://doi.org/10.1111/ips.12076

Pallister-Wilkins, P. (2018). Hotspots and the geographies of humanitarianism. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *38*(6), 991–1008. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775818754884

Perkowski, N. (2016). Deaths, Interventions, Humanitarianism and Human Rights in the Mediterranean 'Migration Crisis'. *Mediterranean Politics*, *21*(2), 331–335. https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2016.1145827

Poole, R. (2012). *Morality and Modernity*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203168936

Reid-Henry, S. M. (2014). Humanitarianism as liberal diagnostic: humanitarian reason and the political rationalities of the liberal will-to-care. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, *39*(3), 418–431. https://doi.org/10.1111/tran.12029

Rieff, D. (2003). *A bed for the night: Humanitarianism in crisis* (1st Simon & Schuster trade pbk. ed.). Simon & Schuster.

Steinvorth, U. (2017). Applying the Idea of Solidarity to Europe. In A. Grimmel & S. M. Giang (Eds.), *Solidarity in the European Union* (pp. 9–19). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57036-5_2

Thompson, J. B. (1984). *Studies in the Theory of Ideology*. University of California Press.

Trenz, H.-J. (7/2014). *The Saga of Europeanisation: On the Narrative Construction of a European Society* (ARENA Working Paper). ARENA Centre for European Studies.

Triandafyllidou, A. (2018). A "Refugee Crisis" Unfolding: "Real" Events and Their Interpretation in Media and Political Debates. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, *16*(1-2), 198–216. https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2017.1309089

van Dijk, T. A. (1985). Cognitive Situation Models in Discourse Production: The Expression of Ethnic Situations in Prejudiced Discourse. *In Forgas J.P. (Eds) Language and Social Situations. Springer Series in Social Psychology*, 61–79.

van Dijk, T. A. (1995). Power and the News Media. *Political Communication and Action*, *1995*, 9–36.

van Dijk, T. A. (1997). What is Political Discourse Analysis? *Belgian Journal of Linguistics*, *11*(1), 11–52. https://doi.org/10.1075/bjl.11.03dij

van Dijk, T. A. (1998). *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. Sage Publications.

van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Ideology and discourse analysis. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, *11*(2), 115–140. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569310600687908

van Dijk, T. A. (2013). *News As Discourse*. *Routledge Communication Series*. Taylor and Francis. http://gbv.eblib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=1517662

Vollmer, B., & Karakayali, S. (2018). The Volatility of the Discourse on Refugees in Germany. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies, 16*(1-2), 118–139. https://doi.org/10.1080/15562948.2017.1288284

Vollmer, B. A. (2017). The Continuing Shame of Europe: Discourses on migration policy in Germany and the UK. *Migration Studies, 5*(1), 49–64. https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnw025

Waever, O. (1995). Securitization and desecuritization. In R. D. Lipschutz (Ed.), *New directions in world politics. On security* (pp. 46–79). Columbia Univ. Press.

Watson, S. (2011). The 'human' as referent object? *Security Dialogue, 42*(1), 3–20. https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010610393549

Williams, A. (2010). *The Ethos of Europe*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511750335

Williams, R. (1977). *Marxism and Literature*. Oxford University Press.

Wodak, R. (2009). The discourse-historical approach. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (2nd ed., pp. 63–95). SAGE.

Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (2009). Critical discourse analysis: History, agenda, theory and methodology. In R. Wodak & M. Meyer (Eds.), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (2nd ed., pp. 1–33). SAGE.

Wodak, R., & van Dijk, T. A. (Eds.). (2000). *The investigation, explanation and countering of xenophobia and racism: Vol. 2. Racism at the top: Parliamentary discourses on ethnic issues in six European States*. Drava Verlag.

Woolf, S. (2012). Knowledge of Others and Self-Perceptions of European Identity. *Historein, 2*, 55–64. https://doi.org/10.12681/historein.112

Youssefi, K., Kanani, A., & Shojaei, A. (2013). Ideological or International Move? A Critical Discourse Analysis toward the Represenation of Iran Sanctions in Western Printed Media. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 4*(6), 1343–1350.

Zielonka, J. (2013). Europe's new civilizing missions: the EU's normative power discourse. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, *18*(1), 35–55. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569317.2013.750172

Appendix

Table 1

Corpus Documents including Document Type, Title and Date

Type	Title	Datum
Speech	Recent human smuggling incidents in the Mediterranean	13.01.2015
Speech	Migration: a joint European responsibility	19.02.2015
Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos following the Home Affairs Council	12.03.2015
Statement	European Commission Statement on developments in the Mediterranean	19.04.2015
Statement	Statement by European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris Avramopoulos and Minister of Interior of Spain, Jorge Fernández Díaz	19.04.2015
Speech	First Vice-President Frans Timmermans' Introductory Remarks at the Commission Press Conference	13.05.2015
Statement	Joint statement following a working dinner with Turkish Ministers Çavuşoğlu and Bozkir	17.05.2015
Speech	Opening Statement by First Vice-President Timmermans at the European Parliament Plenary Debate on the European Agenda on Migration	20.05.2015
Statement	Joint Statement ahead of World Refugee Day on 20 June	19.06.2015
Speech	"A European Response to Migration: Showing solidarity and sharing responsibility"	14.08.2015
Speech	Opening Remarks of First Vice-President Frans Timmermans and Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos at Kos Press Conference	04.09.2015
Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos following his visit to Austria	07.09.2015
Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Johannes Hahn on the EU's support for Western Balkans, Turkey and neighbourhood in the addressing the challenges of refugee crisis	17.09.2015

Speech	Speech by Commissioner Marianne Thyssen: EU funds in support of the refugee crisis	25.09.2015
Speech	Remarks of Commissioner Avramopoulos at the Press Conferences of the Justice and Home Affairs Council	08.10.2015
Speech	Speaking Points of President Juncker – Press Conference on Western Balkans Route Leaders' Meeting	26.10.2015
Speech	Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 15 October 2015 and the Leaders' Meeting on refugee flows along the Western Balkan route of 25 October 2015 - speech by President Juncker at the European Parliament plenary session	27.10.2015
Speech	Remarks of Commissioner Avramopoulos in Athens to mark the first flight from Greece under the EU Relocation Scheme	04.11.2015
Statement	Meeting of heads of state or government with Turkey - EU-Turkey statement, 29/11/2015	29.11.2015
Speech	Speaking points by Commissioner Avramopoulos - Borders Package	15.12.2015
Speech	Speech by President Juncker at the EP Plenary – Preparation of the European Council meeting of 17-18 December 2015	16.12.2015
Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos to the LIBE Committee at the European Parliament	14.01.2016
Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos to the European Parliament Plenary Session	02.02.2016
Speech	Keynote Speech by Commissioner Avramopoulos at the 2016 Harvard European Conference: Europe at the Crossroads of the Migration and Security Crises	20.02.2016
Statement	Joint Statement by Dutch Minister for Migration Klaas Dijkhoff and European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris Avramopoulos	23.02.2016
Speech	14th Norbert Schmelzer lecture – Lecture by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, ‘The European Union – a source of stability in a time of crisis’	03.03.2016
Speech	Remarks of Commissioner Avramopoulos at the Press Conference on 4 March 2016 Ahead of the Meeting of EU Heads of State or Government on 7 March 2016	04.03.2016

Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos to the European Parliament Plenary Session	08.03.2016
Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos during his visit to Idomeni, Greece	15.03.2016
Speech	Readout by First Vice-President Frans Timmermans following the College Meeting on 16 March	16.03.2016
Speech	Press remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos at the UNCHR high-level meeting on global responsibility sharing for Syrian refugees	30.03.2016
Speech	Remarks by First Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioner Avramopoulos at the Readout of the College Meeting of 6 April 2016	06.04.2016
Speech	Speech by President Jean-Claude Juncker at the 2016 Spring Meetings of the IMF, World Bank flagship event on 'Forced Displacement: A Global Development Challenge'	15.04.2016
Speech	Speech by President Jean-Claude Juncker at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe	19.04.2016
Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos to the Committee on Federal and European Affairs of the Bavarian Parliament on 26 April	26.04.2016
Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos at the press conference following the College meeting	15.06.2016
Statement	Joint Statement ahead of World Refugee Day 2016	19.06.2016
Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos at the round table on Addressing vulnerabilities of refugees and migrants on their journeys from their countries of origin to their countries of arrival at the UN Migration Summit	19.09.2016
Speech	Speech by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker at the autumn reception of the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW)	12.10.2016
Speech	Speech by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker at the 20th anniversary of the European Policy Centre - "The road to Rome: from crisis management to governing the EU"	13.10.2016

Statement	Speeches by Commissioners Avramopoulos and Jourová at the 10th European Forum on the rights of the child - The protection of children in migration	29.11.2016
Statement	Joint Statement on the occasion of International Migrant Day on 18 December	16.12.2016
Statement	Statement by Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides on his visit to Belgrade, Serbia	22.01.2017
Statement	Joint Statement on World Refugee Day 2017	20.06.2017
Speech	Speech at the EU Ambassadors Conference	30.08.2017
Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos at the EP Plenary session "Winter plan for Asylum Seekers"	15.11.2017
Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos at the 8th Bosphorus Summit	27.11.2017
Statement	Europe – the continent of solidarity: Joint Statement on the occasion of International Migrant Day	17.12.2017
Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos at the EP Plenary Session on the humanitarian emergencies in the Mediterranean and solidarity in the EU	13.06.2018
Statement	Joint Statement on World Refugee Day 2018	20.06.2018
Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos on managing migration	21.06.2018
Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos at the EP Plenary session on the Reform of the EU asylum and migration policy in light of the continued humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean and Africa.	15.01.2019
Statement	Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini, Commissioners Johannes Hahn and Dimitris Avramopoulos on the shipwreck off the coast of Libya	26.07.2019
Speech	Speech by Commissioner Avramopoulos at the joint event by Nea Dimokratia and CDU/CSU at Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Brussels	11.09.2019
Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos at the 6th Budapest Process Ministerial Conference	20.09.2019

Speech	Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos at the EP Plenary session on the situation of migrants in Bosnia, in particular in Bihać	14.11.2019

Abstract

Public discourse has a strong influence on a society's way of seeing the world. Specifically via the cognitive images and structures transmitted through it, ideologies and attitudes are shaped, and hierarchies of power can be maintained in an indiscernible and implicit manner. Since political discourse is widely distributed and consumed, the subtle messages it carries are always worthy of closer analysis. This study zooms in on the EU's identity and the migration crisis and how these issues are connected in EU political discourse. The EU prides itself as being a beacon for humanistic values and having an exceptionally high standard of morality. This stands in contradiction to its migration policy, which causes death and suffering along the EU border. Moreover, this identity does not coincide with European history of colonialism, imperialism, and internal conflict. This study is interested in determining how the discourse creates a morally superior EU, despite its history, and how this (self-)image is harmonized with the morally problematic migration policy it pursues. The analysis applies a Critical Discourse Analysis to speeches and statements by the European Commission. It examines discursive strategies from media and communication research using insights from political and historical theory on EU identity and values. The results show that the narrative of a humanitarian and morally integer EU is heavily incorporated in the discourse. This narrative is used to, on the one hand, cover and legitimize securitized and exclusionary policy goals, and on the other, locate responsibility for the predicament of refugees away from the EU. Discursive methods such as *Othering*, *Ideological Squaring* as well as *Delocalization* are applied to present an EU that is superior to the Outside and justly acts as normative guide. The analysis also demonstrates how the EU's identity still relies heavily on imperialistic thought structures and hierarchies.

Keywords: EU, Migration, Political Communication, Humanitarianism, Identity, Critical Discourse Analysis, European Commission

Abstrakt

Öffentlicher Diskurs beeinflusst stark die Weltanschauung einer Gesellschaft. Insbesondere durch die kognitiven Bilder und Strukturen, die vermittelt werden, werden Ideologien und Einstellungen geformt, und Machthierarchien auf unerkennbare und implizite Weise aufrechterhalten. Da politischer Diskurs weit verbreitet und konsumiert wird, sind die subtilen Botschaften, die er transportiert, immer eine genauere Analyse wert. Diese Studie befasst sich mit der Identität der EU und der Migrationskrise sowie mit der Frage, wie sich diese Themen im politischen Diskurs der EU überschneiden. Die EU rühmt sich, ein Verfechter für humanistische Werte zu sein und einen außergewöhnlich hohen moralischen Standard zu haben. Dies steht im Widerspruch zu einer Migrationspolitik, die Tod und Leid entlang der EU-Grenzen verursacht. Außerdem kollidiert diese Identität mit der europäischen Geschichte von Kolonialismus, Imperialismus und internen Konflikten. In dieser Studie wird untersucht, wie der Diskurs, trotz ihrer Historie, eine moralisch überlegene EU schafft und wie dieses (Selbst-)Bild mit der angestrebten, moralisch problematischen Migrationspolitik in Einklang gebracht wird. Die Analyse wendet eine Kritische Diskursanalyse auf Reden und Stellungnahmen der Europäischen Kommission an. Sie untersucht diskursive Strategien aus der Medien- und Kommunikationsforschung und nutzt dafür Erkenntnisse aus der politischen und historischen Theorie zu Identität und Werten der EU. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass das Narrativ einer humanitären und moralisch integeren EU stark in den Diskurs eingebunden ist und verwendet wird, um einerseits sicherheitspolitische und ausgrenzende Ziele zu verschleiern und zu legitimieren, und andererseits die Verantwortung für die Notlage der Flüchtlinge von der EU weg zu verorten. Diskursive Methoden wie *Othering*, *ideologische Quadratur* sowie *Delokalisierung* werden angewandt, um eine EU zu präsentieren, die der Außenwelt überlegen ist und zu Recht als normative Richtschnur fungiert. Die Analyse hat auch gezeigt, dass die Identität der EU immer noch stark von imperialistischem Denkstrukturen und Hierarchien geprägt ist.

Schlagwörter: EU, Migration, Politische Kommunikation, Humanitarismus, Identität, Kritische Diskursanalyse, Europäische Kommission