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European External Border Management and its Narratives

Aspects of Dominance and Neocolonialism in European External Action during the "Refugee Crisis"

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

Large numbers of incoming refugees since 2015 were perceived as a major challenge for European cooperation and migratory regimes and the situation has within Europe soon been seen as a crisis. Since then, European states and the European Union (EU) have intensified measures to shut down migrant routes to Europe as well as their attempts to externalise means of protection of refugees in Africa. Based on a theoretical framework consisting of political science border studies, postcolonial studies and the method of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) together with the study of narratives in politics, this thesis analyses two critical events in this field, the 2015 Valletta Summit on migration where European and African leaders discussed the terms of migration cooperation and the 2018 debate on disembarkation platforms. The focus in this work lies especially on neocolonial elements in the power relations between Europe and Africa and how these are expressed in the narratives that were used to justify and explain the action taken. For this purpose, official documents, speeches, interviews and additional utterances from European heads of states and European politicians as well as from African heads of states and African Union (AU) representatives are analysed. Eventually, the thesis comes to the conclusion that a form of neocolonial exists that is here named implicit or indirect neocolonialism.

1. Introduction

In 2015, unprecedented numbers of people on flight, seeking for shelter and protection, reached Europe. The situation was quickly referred to as a refugee crisis. The number of incoming asylum seekers challenged the capacities of European border states as well as the European asylum system under the Dublin regulations. These regulate, that countries of first arrival have to be the ones examining the asylum application and taking care of the people on flight. Refugees arrived via various main migratory routes of which most were closed and subsequently fenced off. Just the dangerous and deadly route via the Mediterranean remained hard to close.

Heads of states and European leaders in crisis mode reacted strongly in most – if not all – member states and quickly steered the discussion towards the limitation of refugee numbers and distribution of asylum seekers over Europe. Migration became one of the most dominant themes in numerous national elections and for far-right parties.

Closing down migratory routes also involves cooperation with third countries, and here the securitisation of the routes was an issue of central relevance. Further, the externalisation of border protection and means of refugee protection became increasingly popular measures in the European debate.

This thesis will specifically focus on the narratives accompanying the aspects of externalisation and securitisation during the "refugee crisis" and aims at creating a deeper understanding of the terms on which negotiations and cooperation between Europe and affected third states in Africa (as being located on the other end of the Mediterranean route) are based. The study of these power relations will build on a theoretical fundament that composes of border studies and postcolonial studies and will make use of the methodological concept of Critical Discourse Analysis by Norman Fairclough supplemented by the narratological analysis by Albrecht Koschorke. With these tools, the power relations and structures, represented in narratives regarding the underlying cross-Mediterranean cooperation, shall be examined critically with a particular interest in the (alleged) existence and form of neocolonial elements. The question guiding this research is as follows:

How are unequal or neocolonial patterns of thinking and acting expressed in narratives accompanying and justifying measures to externalise border management by European political leaders during the so-called "refugee crisis"? For this qualitative research, two case studies have been selected, which present two relevant sequences from 2015, the year the "refugee crisis" started, and 2018. The first one is the Valetta Summit in November 2015 and the second one the debate about "disembarkation platforms" in third countries. While the case selection will be justified at a later point, these two cases are especially suitable to give insight into European action and narratives and reactions from African states.

The paper will start with a theoretical chapter consisting of a description and explanation of relevant concepts and an introduction to the used concepts and

works from both border studies and postcolonial studies. It will eventually bring these two strands together and present the theoretical assumption of the analytical work. In the second part, the methodology as well as the case and data selections will be outlined. This is followed by the analysis of the two chosen case studies. The second part will end with a discussion of the results of both cases and be followed by a final discussion.

2. Border Studies, Externalisation and Postcolonialism: The theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the theoretical framework this thesis builds on will be presented. First, the two pillars – border studies and postcolonial studies – will be outlined. In the third section, the two concepts will be brought together and construct the fundament for this work's research question, grounded in the assumption that deeper integration of postcolonial studies within border studies is necessary and feasible.

2.1. Externalisation and European Border Studies

As this paper will, in its later sections, study the European negotiations with its neighbouring countries in North-Africa, the first question that has to be answered is: what does the study of borders tell us? Why is it relevant here? And what are borders? Various disciplines are concerned with borders and thus present definitions that give space to respectively important aspects. Borders "may be physical and thus regulate the movement of people and goods, and functional or legal borders, which circumscribe the application of specific laws and rules. Departing from the Westphalian model of statehood, in which borders simultaneously defined territory, state authority and the 'nation', borders are thus conceived of as complex social constructions" (Del Sarto, 2016: 221). They give insights into respective societies and their interaction with "the other", living on the foreign side of the border. It can be the case that border regions between states with many similarities are characterised by border conflicts or vice-versa. The border is, often in a cultural sense but as well in the territorial, used to illustrate disparities to "the other". Especially in colonial relations the functions of the border for self-description and branding of other cultures were important for identity-building. In her very insightful outline of the current state and background of border studies, Sarah Green uses a concept by MacKenzie: "[B]orders could be both an engine (creating the places that they mark) and a camera (reflecting the character of those places)" (Green, 2013: 349). In this sense, the study of managing border policies and aspects of border governance can reveal more subtle information about European identity and identities and help to understand better especially European foreign policy.

Externalisation of European borders is on the table since the early 21st century. The British government under Tony Blair proposed in 2003 already the creation of asylum seekers' camps in transit countries. Since then, several agreements between member states (MS) and third countries have been reached, which aim at keeping migrants and asylum seekers outside the Union's territory and strengthen the forces of neighbouring countries (Prestianni, 2016: 5).

Navas provides a concise definition of externalisation: "In border practices, to externalize means to delocalize the limits of the control of a sovereign country through the implication and accountability of other countries. This practice assumes 'migrations become part of the security agenda, implying that they are part of the foreign policy of the state, which is also something new'" (Navas in Afailal, 2017: 3). Externalising border measures often go hand in hand with a number of effects: (1) the criminalisation of migration by the state externalising, (2) combination of economic and financial logics with border protection, e.g. conditionalisation, the linkage of development funds and

investment to the implementation of certain legislation, and (3) *securitisation*. The latter describes the transfer of certain subjects into matters of security: Security becomes the defining frame in which these subjects are considered. Especially migration got *securitised* in recent times, as it is visible not only in the following analysis and European debates, e.g. about the link between migration and terrorism but also at the US- Mexican border. Securitisation is not necessarily connected to an actual threat to the security of a state.

Externalisation in this work refers specifically to the externalisation of European border regimes. Externalisation can be reached by the establishment of European forces in third- countries, training of third-country forces (e.g. the training of the Libyan coast guard by operation Sophia) or the establishment of legal and governance structures.

Within the extremely diverse field of border studies, academics from anthropology, cultural studies, human geography, sociology and philosophy work on, for example, border communities, dynamics and conflicts or shifting meanings of borders (Green, 2013: 348). Green describes border studies as being concerned with the historical changes and purposes of borders, the relations between borders and people's identity and more recently an interest in how spatial relations are getting reclassified when border regimes change (Green, 2013: 348).

Naturally, political science border studies are mostly concerned with the role of borders for national sovereignty (Pettersson, 2018: 18), the effect of particular policies on borderlands, e.g. the creation of transnational border regions or areas of cooperation like the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) (Celata & Coletti, 2015) or other political aspects of borders and borderlands. The study of migration was always of special interest to border studies, e.g. in the study of the US-Mexican border. In recent times, border studies have developed from the primary focus on people and the influence of the border on their identity and now "have been increasingly interested in the historical variability of the form and purpose of borders. Thus the focus has shifted more to how places, locations, and spatial relations are being reclassified as border regimes change" (Green, 2013: 349). Border studies are "exploring how this works in practice, and especially the study of changes in border regimes across time, allows researchers to analyze the ongoing, power-inflected remaking of the spatial worlds (including the relations and separations between its bits and parts) in which people, animals, and things live, move, and interact" (Green, 2013: 349). This led to an increasing interest in elements of border regimes such as securitisation or externalisation. With the focus on sovereignty functions, borders were mainly seen as physical and legal dividing lines (Celata & Coletti, 2015: 12). The dominant interest in *hard borders*, however, is getting more and more challenged by a growing interest in the *soft* dimension of borders. Hard borders are clearly visible and mark the definite end of one state's territorial and political influence. Soft borders are rather zones than demarcation lines, states or supranational entities can influence policies and governance beyond its territory.

This "post-Westphalian" (Celata & Coletti, 2015: 14) approach is of particular relevance in the case of Europe. Bialasiewicz, writing about the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), states that "creating spaces such as the ENP [is] meant 'to avoid drawing new dividing lines in Europe' […], the EU presumably aims to transcend the conventional (nation-state) distinction between inside/outside" (Bialasiewicz et al.: 80). She further argues that "[t]he question of where Europe's borders are to be found has, indeed, become

relevant again in the context of Europe projecting its bordering processes beyond its formal limits, visible in the EU's deployment of Frontex patrols in the Mediterranean, its use of the Neighbourhood Policy to develop borderlands on its eastern fringes, or the UK's preference for offshore and juxtaposed borders (Rumford, 2008). The question of Europe's borders is also given fresh impetus by the fact that there are many Europe's and hence a plurality of European borders. The borders of Europe constructed by the Council of Europe are not the same as those of the European Economic Area which in turn are not the same as those of Schengenland which are different again from those policed by the EU's border agency, Frontex. But there exists yet another, and arguably even more important, reason for the contemporary relevance of the question of where Europe's borders are to be found. This is that Europe may possess borders that not everyone will recognise as such or acknowledge as being important. By this I mean that the borders of Europe are not necessarily agreed upon by consensus: different institutions and peoples construe the location, meaning, and importance of Europe's borders in different ways. These divergent understandings are visible in various region-building initiatives (such as those described by Alun Jones and Felix Ciuta), but also in the construction of different 'topologies' of (EU)ropean belonging" (Bialasiewicz et al.: 84).

The complex matter of European borders that is outlined here reflects what Zielonka describes as "maze Europe" (Zielonka, 2006: 4) and Etienne Balibar calls the "Great Wall of Europe": "a complex of differentiated institutions, installations, legislations, repressive and preventive politics, and international agreements which together aim at making the liberty of circulation not impossible but extremely difficult or selective and unilateral for certain categories of individuals and certain groups" (Balibar, 2006: 1-2). In these interpretations, the EU would develop a "multi- layered and heterogeneous polity with multiple authorities, shared competencies and blurred borders" (Celata & Coletti, 2015: 15). Soft border management that creates mazes and great walls is inextricably connected to the externalisation of borders. The "fortress Europe" (Celata & Coletti, 2015: 15), then, does not necessarily have clear-cut borders (e.g. in forms of fences and walls), instead, border regulations and – more geographically – entire borderlands create liminal spaces of being "in-between".

Supported is this argument by Kinnvall's claim (Kinnvall, 2016: 156-7) that European migration politics aims at increasing mobility for some but restricting it for others. This practice, further, means "to delocalize the limits of the control of a sovereign country through the implication and accountability of other countries. This practice assumes 'migrations become part of the security agenda, implying that they are part of the foreign policy of the state, which is also something new'" (Navas in Afailal, 2017: 3). It is this focus on the combination of security measures and the management of the flow of people (and goods) that is not only strong in the political discourse and decision making but also in the academic analysis, as already suggested in the paragraph on securitisation above. Studies which reflect different aspects of the entanglement of security aspects with migration and regional cooperation in and beyond of Europe through different academic lenses such as anthropology, sociology or migration studies have been carried out among many others by Léonard (Léonard, 2010), Bendixsen (Bendixsen, 2016), Little and Vaughan-Williams (Little & Vaughan-Williams, 2017), Boedeltje and Houtum (Boedeltje and Houtum, 2011), the above-quoted book by Celata and Coletti (Celata & Coletti, 2015) or an edition by Lazaridis and Wadia (Lazaridis and Wadia, 2015). Celata and Coletti examine the ENP in detail and state that "throughout the ENP, EU

institutions try hard to balance this emphasis on securitization by prioritizing other dimensions of cooperation—to contrast the image of a fortress Europe with the idea of a borderless Europe […]. However, it is difficult to deny that the main aim, especially in recent years, is to use cooperation for the securitization of EU's external borders." Other academics also highlight this effect of regionalisation (Bialasiewicz et al., 2013).

Detecting European foreign policy's ambiguity appears to be of high relevance in the study of European border policy. A clear focus here lies on the impact on the human beings affected. Examples of such findings are legion: Bialasiewicz identifies a "discriminatory effect" (Bialasiewicz, 2009: 84), Little and Vaughan-Williams detect an increasing entanglement of securitisation and human rights (Little & Vaughan-Williams, 2017) and Boedeltje and Houtum describe a policy that is "'welcoming those migrants we need for our economic and social well-being, while clamping down on illegal immigration' and therefore supporting the improvement of border control and fighting illegal immigration and people trafficking" (Boedeltje & Houtum, 2011: 137).

What seems to be underrepresented here is an interest in the power relations between the European block and the states with which or where the European states establish their upstream border regimes. Few of the studies focus on the unequal power relations between the parties; few examples are the already quoted Boedeltje and Houtum and Del Sarto (Del Sarto, 2016).

In his very critical reflection of American political science, Chandra claims dominance of Eurocentric perspectives and lacking interest in postcolonial perspectives (Chandra, 2013). Arguably, the risk to disregard the historic relations and, most importantly, their effect on the perception of current European external migration and border action can be experienced not only in American political science. Korvensyrjä argues similarly by pointing out an alleged "amnesia" (Korvensyrjä, 2017: 192) of the colonial past and its implications. Other studies, which imply a postcolonial framework, are focused on the media coverage instead of political framing (Gardner, 2018). Hence, and to give special room the examination of power relations between European states and the EU and third countries that are affected by efforts to externalise European borders, this thesis will include theoretical work from postcolonial studies.

2.2. Learning from Postcolonialism and the Concepts of Neocolonialism and Imperialism

For this thesis, postcolonial studies are used to complement border studies and shift the focus towards the problematisation of power structures and dynamics. Using the words of Young, postcolonialism is "both contestatory and committed towards political ideals of a transnational social justice. It attacks the status quo of hegemonic economic imperialism, and the history of colonialism and imperialism" (Young, 2016: 58). Put differently, postcolonialism sees only a "post" in the sense of post-direct-rule but not a "post to imperialism in its second sense, that is of a general system of a power relation of economic and political domination" (Young, 2016: 44).

Using the lens(es) of postcolonialism means to use "a dialectical concept that marks the broad historical facts of decolonization and the determined achievement of sovereignty – but also the realities of nations and peoples emerging into a new imperialistic context of economic and sometimes political domination" (Young, 2016: 57). Postcolonialism is "a

disciplinary field and an interdisciplinary methodology grounded in the post-structuralist and postmodern critique. As a discipline, it studies the effects of imperialism, colonialism (until the independence of colonies), and neocolonialism (in the 20th and 21st centuries) on societies and individuals. It addresses questions about identity, hybridity, gender, sex, race, species, language, knowledge, modernity, transnationality, multiculturalism, and cosmopolitanism, among many others" (Oxford Bibliographies, 2017).

Among the various scopes of postcolonial studies, this thesis is concerned with the study of neocolonialism, or, more neutrally, power relations between formerly colonising and formerly colonised regions. Postcolonial studies would clearly not be the only academic field through which these can be examined. However, it is especially suitable as the critical examination of current relations is, just as shown above, at the very core of the field.

For the definition of neocolonialism, Young draws heavily on Kwame Nkrumah's definition and argues, this definition is of great value until today. This rather economy-focused definition reads as follows:

> "Nkrumah argued that 'The essence of neocolonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus political policy is directed from outside' (Nkrumah 1965: ix). Independence, therefore, is a sham. Historically, Nkrumah suggested that neocolonialism, like colonialism before it, represents the export of the social conflict of capitalist countries; in particular, the demands of western welfare states, with their comparatively high working-class living standards, meant that class conflict within the nation-state had been transformed into an international division of labour. The international division of labour would become a defining characteristic of the postcolonial era" (Oxford Bibliographies, 2017).

This export of social struggles can as well be read in terms of other fields than the economy, in the here examined case, then, the externalisation of means of protection and security reflects this export in a new form. The consequence is a reading of current political events and interaction that is both more sensitive towards (unequal) power relations and connects to potential roots in the colonial past. Acknowledging structures of domination rooted in the past leads to the rejection of the "narrative of European innocence" (Korvensyrjä, 2017: 200) and the questioning of Eurocentric thought (Castro-Varela & Dhawan, 2015: 285 ff).

Postcolonial studies are deeply rooted in historical analyses. But while the study of current neocolonialism originates from a postcolonial basis, it can be conducted more independently from the historical context as it is to be found in present relations. A further definition – by the Encyclopaedia Britannica – defines neocolonialism as a current act of power exercise with connects to colonial times, explaining it as

> "the control of less-developed countries by developed countries through indirect means. […]The term is now an unambiguously negative one that is widely used to refer to a form of global power in which transnational corporations and global and multilateral institutions combine to perpetuate colonial forms of exploitation of developing countries. […] The term neocolonialism was originally applied to European policies that were seen as schemes to maintain control of African and other dependencies. The event that marked the beginning of this usage was the

European Summit in Paris in 1957, where six European heads of government agreed to include their overseas territories within the European Common Market under trade arrangements that were seen by some national leaders and groups as representing a new form of economic domination" (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2019c).

The "All African Peoples' Conference" in 1961 defined neocolonialism as "an indirect and subtle form of domination by political, economic, social, military or technical means" (Pambazuka News, 2011). All definitions presented here emphasise the revealing of the perpetuation of colonial and/or imperial power structures by new measures and the exercise of power in current relations between former colonisers and colonised. As it is argued here, it is worth to give this dimension special room in the study of European external action by focusing on current power relations with a theoretical framework that is based on the assumptions and critical questioning of postcolonial studies. *Imperialism*, defined by the Encyclopaedia Britannica, is

> "state policy, practice, or advocacy of extending power and dominion, especially by direct territorial acquisition or by gaining political and economic control of other areas. Because it always involves the use of power, whether military force or some subtler form, imperialism has often been considered morally reprehensible, and the term is frequently employed in international propaganda to denounce and discredit an opponent's foreign policy" (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2019b).

Imperialism is much deeper rooted in actual land-taking and display of own advantages via hard power, while neocolonialism is more based on means of soft power. Kwame Nkrumah writes: "[N]eocolonialism is not a sign of imperialism's strength but rather of its last hideous gasp" (Nkrumah, 1965: 253).

Analytical work, concerned with post- and neocolonialism in the case of Europe has necessarily to ask why all member states would be held accountable for such behaviour and legacy. It can be argued that by far not all European states have a past as colonisers; some even have a past as colonised states. Secondly, European politics, while getting deeper integrated even in the field of external action, are not homogenous enough to treat them all the same.

While these concerns are valid, indeed it became a conventional narrative in Europe since 2015 to search for a common "European solution" for the so-called refugee crisis. In all proposals and initiatives dealt with here, the EU institutions are key actors and European positions are aligned to a high degree. Even more important is the long-term effect of joining a union of states that is described as a "normative power" with a substantial canon of values. Bhambra argues that joining the EU means that "[a]ny state that joins the EU, takes on not only the benefits of membership but has to share in the responsibilities emanating from the continuing legacies of its shared colonial history" (Bhambra, 2015).

2.3. Border Studies With Postcolonial Influence

As Bhambra states, postcolonial approaches work both "'backwards', in terms of reconstructing historical representations, as well as 'forwards' to the creation of future projects" (Bhambra, 2009: 70). The historical dimension is undoubtedly of crucial relevance to understanding Europe in times of the postcolonial. Therefore, this paper

will integrate at a later point remarks on the history of European migration history. However, the historical dimension is here used as a backdrop for the analysis of current EU-African relations. The analysis will then be focused not on the historical continuity of power relations but use the foundation of the study of neocolonialism in postcolonial studies to analyse the existing power dynamics between the actors. Such use of postcolonial studies "requires us to bring forward the perspective of the world – that is, to think of Europe from a global perspective – as well as to bring forward other (non-European) perspectives on the world" (Bhambra, 2009).

Integrating the interest in post- and neocolonialism in the analysis of attempts to externalise the European border shifts the interest towards (1) the perception non-European actors have of European external action, (2) border practice as an exercise of power (Del Sarto, 2016: 216ff) and (3) the questioning of the congruency of values of the "normative power" Europe. Already above, Kinnvall's argument of promoted migration for some and restricted for others has been presented. She continues by describing this policy in combination with border controls on the European level as the constitution of "specific colonial technologies of governmentality and power" (Kinnvall, 2016: 156). The here presented research will examine European border politics with a postcolonial studies influence and be guided by the following research statement from which the below presented research question is developed:

The increasing entanglement of the logic of securitisation, humanitarianism and border management (Cf. Little & Vaughan-Williams, 2017) in times of a "refugee crisis" causes a further push for the externalisation Europe's borders. It is assumed (Kinnvall, 2016) that colonial thought and postcolonial narratives and practice did and still do play a central role in both Europe's external action as well as integration. Therefore, this paper aims at creating a better understanding of how such subliminal mind-sets still influence and shape European external action.

The following research question will be the basis for the following case studies:

How are unequal or neocolonial patterns of thinking and acting expressed in narratives accompanying and justifying measures to externalise border management by European political leaders during the so-called "refugee crisis"?

3. Methodology

3.1. Case Selection

For the examination of the above-raised question, two cases have been selected. These are the Valletta Summit on Migration, taking place on Malta the 11th-12th of November 2015, and the most recent discussion on the establishment of asylum centres (called disembarkation platforms) on non-European territory. This proposal was widely discussed among European leaders in the second half of 2018. More about the period of examination will be described in subchapter 1.3 below.

Examples of European attempts to externalise its borders are legion. Various projects are established in countries such as Niger or Chad that aim at early management of refugees on their way towards Europe. Other cases could have been operation Sophia (a central part of it is the training of the Libyan coastguard) or the European Neighbourhood

Policy (ENP). What makes the two selected cases attractive is first and foremost their respective discourses and debates. While following the standard procedure of a summit with several pre-negotiations, the contrary perspectives, perceptions and proposed actions are exceptionally visible in the case of the Valletta Summit. The debate about asylum centres is, as already implied above, not a new one. Yet, the proposal reached its greatest popularity as well as opposition during 2018. Here again, an exceptionally wide range of statements from both the European and the African side could be collected. A public discussion as in the two cases is not always usual, especially in sensitive fields like security cooperation and externalisation. A second reason for this specific case selection is that one stands at the beginning of the "crisis" while the other one marks one of the latest attempts to solve it. Three years have passed in the meantime, and it will be argued that the two cases can also depict the evolution of positions in the meantime.

3.2. Narratives and Method: Critical Discourse Analysis: Elite response

3.2.1. CDA: Foci, presumptions and elements

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) describes a variety of methods bringing the critical study of linguistics into social science. One of the leading scholars in the field is Norman Fairclough who published the internationally successful work "Language and Power" in 1989. The following analysis builds on the second edition of this work (.Fairclough, 2001) Like all – highly diverse – forms of CDA *Language and Power* emerged from critical linguistics in the tradition of Foucauldian thought and Marxism. It focuses on the critical study of power and its relation to language. CDA methods are highly interdisciplinary and put special emphasis on contextualisation and the background of the analysed text.

For Fairclough, language is a form of social practice. Therefore it is a part of the society, and social and political phenomena are, or are reflected in, linguistic ones: "[T]he relationship between discourse, power and ideology […] is at the centre of the social practice of discourse" (Fairclough, 2001: 25). A *discourse* is a whole process with various elements. The text, in spoken or written form, is the central subject to these elements, with "[its] formal properties […] regarded from the perspective of discourse analysis on the one hand as traces of the productive process, and on the other hand as cues in the process of interpretation" (Fairclough, 2001: 20). The discourses elements are the process of production, (context-based) interpretation and interaction (Fairclough, 2001: 20). The latter one "is [the] relationship between transitory social events […] and more durable social structures which shape and are shaped by these events. In both cases, the analyst is in the position of offering (in a broad sense) interpretations of complex and invisible relationships" (Fairclough, 2001: 22).

3.2.2. The empirical analysis
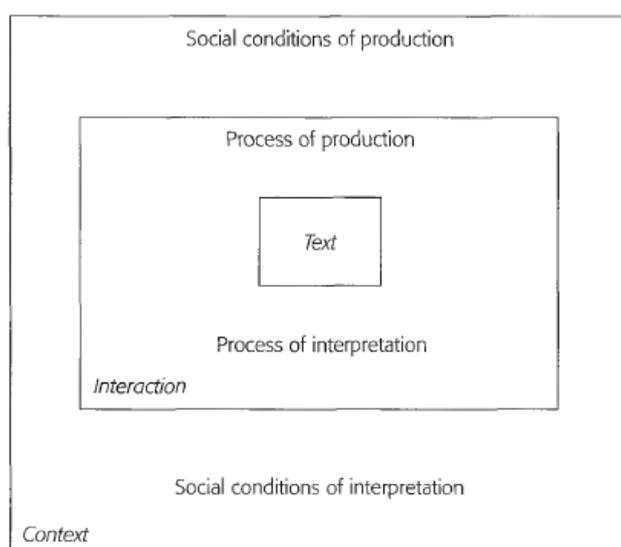
Figure 1: "Discourse as text, interaction and context" from "Language and Power" (Graphic taken from: Fairclough, 2001: 21).

Figure 1, taken from Fairclough's book, visualises the described elements of discourse as well as the three analytical stages of Faiclough's CDA. (1) *Description* studies formal

features of a text. For this stage, three values of a text are introduced:

"A formal feature with *experiential* value is a trace of and a cue to the way in which the text producer's experience of the natural or social world is represented. [I]t is to do with **contents and knowledge and beliefs**. A formal feature with *relational* value is a trace of and a cue to the social relationships which are enacted via the text in the discourse. Relational value is (transparently!) to do with **relations and social relationships**. And, finally, a formal feature with *expressive* value is a trace of and a cue to the producer's evaluation (in the widest sense) of the bit of the reality it relates to. Expressive value is to do with **subjects and social identities**, though only one dimension of the latter concepts is to do with subjective values" (Italics by Fairclough, emphasis by J.B.: Fairclough, 2001: 93).

All three values can appear in interconnected form; they are not fully distinct from each other. While the relational value stands out as being interested in external relations, especially experiential and expressive values are often hard to tell apart. Being concerned with subjects and evaluation of social realities both connect to the experience of the world, current events or developments and solution proposals. The experiential value presents the underlying interpretation and experience of the world while the *expressive value dimension* will in this paper be mostly concerned with the proposed measures. This dimension is rather focused on the judgement of the experienced phenomena. In this work, it is assumed that a judgement can especially be identified through the analysis of the conscious choice of terminology and solution suggestions in political proposals.

Fairclough further presents ten questions.[1] They outline a proposed procedure to conduct the first-stage analysis but "should not be treated as holy writ - it is a guide and not a blueprint" (Fairclough, 2001: 92). In this thesis, they will guide the analysis on the respective level but not all questions are always relevant. (2) The second stage is *interpretation*, which can be both *situational* ("features of the physical situation, properties of participant, what has previously been said") and *intertextual* ("participants in any discourse operate on the basis of assumptions about which previous (series of) discourses the current one is connected to, and their assumptions determine what can be taken as given in the sense of part of common experience, what can be alluded to, disagreed with, and so on") (Fairclough, 2001: 120). The last stage is (3) explanation, which aims at portraying a text (and surrounding discourse) as social process and practice: It is determined by social structures and the effect of reproduction and accumulation on sustaining or changing these structures. Fairclough writes: "On the one hand, we can see discourses as parts of social struggles, and contextualize them in terms

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[1] These are:
- What experiential values do words have?
- What relational values do words have?
- What expressive values do words have?
- What metaphors are used?
- What experiential values do grammatical features have?
- What relational values do grammatical features have?
- What expressive values do grammatical features have?
- How are (simple) sentences linked together?
- What interactional conventions are used?
- What larger-scale structures does the text have?

of these broader (non-discoursal) struggles, and the effects of these struggles on structures. […] On the other hand, we can show what power relationships determine discourses; these relationships are themselves the outcome of struggles, and are established (and, ideally, naturalized) by those with power" (Fairclough, 2001: 135-6). Above, it was stated that the following two case studies will be built on CDA after Fairclough. This means, as Fairclough himself suggests, the presented procedure acts rather as a guide than a blueprint. It is also important to note that this research focusses rather on the detection and analysis of power relations than their critical questioning. This means it will not follow CDA in full consequence in the sense of practical opposition to unequal power relations. The critique of the found, is usually a vital part of CDA; here, however, the normative discussion of the found power structures shall remain for further research.

3.2.3. Narratives

Fairclough argues: "How discourses are structured in a given order of discourse, and how structurings change over time, are determined by *changing relationships of power at the level of the social institution* or of the society. Power at these levels includes the capacity to control orders of discourse" (Fairclough, 2001: 25). This relationship of power is, it will be argued, manifested and made visible in the use of specific narratives. Therefore, this chapter will briefly introduce one linguistic element that is, arguably, of central relevance for the understanding of political presentation and discussion in general: Narratives. This will substitute Fairclough's methodology and replace the item of *ideology.* Poletta describes a narrative's function as follows: "In telling the story of our becoming, as an individual, a nation, a people, we establish who we are. Narratives may be employed strategically to strengthen a collective identity but they also may precede and make possible the development of a coherent community, nation, or collective actor" (Poletta, 1998: 422). In the political sphere, narratives often take strategic positions. Three main functions of these strategic narratives can be identified: (1) Political actors try to influence the development of politics with respective narratives, (2) as a tool to describe the political actor's perspective on identities, the role of country x in the international system etc. and (3) as a strategic outline of the actor's perception of the current and future order in the respective system (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2015).

These elements do also appear in Albrecht Koschorke's "*Wahrheit und Erfindung: Grundzüge einer allgemeinen Erzähltheorie*" (Koschorke, 2012). The book was published in English in 2018 with the title "*Fact and Fiction: Elements of a General Theory of Narrative*". However, in this thesis, it will be referred to the German version. In this work, Koschorke embeds the concepts of narratives deeper in a general narration theory. Here, the narrative's function of shaping the perception of the environment as transporting values and emotions makes them "organisational procedures of a higher order" as they are able to grasp more complex pictures and are able to "even include relations that strive against being simply told" (Translation of this and all following quotes from this source by J.B., Koschorke, 2012: 72): A narrative is a meaningful narrative paradigm, able to bring together various elements into a coherent story. Its function is to legitimise (or de-legitimise) and to create a coherent story, a nexus of events. Hence, a narrative includes perspectivisation and structuring of social events with the aim to present a coherent

interpretation of them. Fulfilling this function, a narrative creates meaning and refers back to tradition and cultural associations. For this, the used language is of importance. These elements are also reflected in the popular definition of a narrative as "a story, a term more often associated with fiction than with political science. Yet narrative also refers to the ways in which we construct disparate facts in our own worlds and weave them together cognitively in order to make sense of our reality. […] As narratives affect our perceptions of political reality, which in turn affect our actions in response to or in anticipation of political events, narrative plays a critical role in the construction of political behavior" (Patterson & Monroe, 1998: 315).

The above mentioned "themes" are elements of the narrative and are of a lower order. Various themes together form a narrative and highlight different aspects. In this sense, they connect to Koschorke's term "*scence"*, a situation the narrative requires to become vivid (Koschorke, 2012: 71). Hence, it can exemplify and express certain elements of the narrative. With the assumption of narratives providing insights in political practice and power relations this case study will focus on the themes, and hence detection of the narrative, in official documents and utterances and positions of leading politicians (elite discourse).

Why is this particular form of narration, of words used by elites, of relevance for this work? CDA aims at the detection of power structures. Within the textual analysis, CDA provides a deeper understanding of the "how" of power structures. This special focus allows telling more about the sender, her/his perceptions and interests and the discursive structure. The power structures CDA aims at examining (that stand, so to say, behind the positions in the discourse) are rooted in what Fairclough calls *ideology*: "Institutional practices which people draw upon without thinking often embody assumptions which directly or indirectly legitimize existing power relations" (Fairclough, 2011: 27). This ideology is social context and experience: an episteme. In Fairclough's interpretation, this is interpreted politically and therefore most likely not aligned with the "external reality". Narratives can be seen as the expression of *ideology*, the underlying episteme is visualised by narratives: "The narrative, it seems, reigns in its realm omnipotent and without commitment; it does not have to worry about congruence with external reality; it takes the liberty of declaring everything and everyone to be an object in the world. Like thinking and speaking in general, telling does not have a sufficient intrinsic sign of truth. Elements of truth, appearance, hearsay, ignorance, error and lies mix in it like in a vortex. Narratives can freely slide back and forth between both possible extremes, commit themselves to a kind of fidelity to reality appropriate to them, or completely cut off their reference to reality without being touched by this alternative in their inner nature" (Koschorke, 2012: 12) . Narratives work in addition to the action (Action Plan, Political Declaration, presidency notes, council conclusions, etc.) and can help to explain the social situation and discourse in which it appears. Hence, narratives will in this work be considered so to say as a proxy for ideology in the definition of Fairclough. In other words, it will substitute the term ideology, as already mentioned above.

3.3. The Selected Data

For both cases, a corpus of data has been put together. The emphasis lies on statements of heads of states and institutions, on what has been framed above as elite discourse. Such utterances are delivered in the form of speeches, collected via

official state webpages, official publications (collected via the respective institutions webpages) as well as interviews and statements quoted by media. To gather the latter ones, the database LexisNexis has been used. Via this medium, articles in German and English have been collected by using similar keywords in both languages (e.g. "disembarkation platform" or "Anlandeplatform"). Only renowned newspapers and news agencies were taken into account. Some sources have been eliminated, e.g. if they have an apparent political affiliation like RT news. Media is considered here as a vehicle that is used to get as close as possible to the original wording of leading politicians. *As close as possible* means that it can in no way be assumed that media delivers the absolute correct quotations. It instead is the best possible approximation. When the data is analysed, this must be kept in mind. However, with eliminating questionable sources and with focusing only on direct quotes, in most cases reconfirmed by a second source, this corpus can be examined scientifically.

Further utterances have been collected via video material, e.g. so-called doorsteps (interviews at arrival) at the Valletta summit. Especially in the case of Valletta but as well in the discussion about the asylum centres, official documents have been analysed. These are the various drafts and final version of the Action Plan (Valletta) and information material, council conclusions and uni- or bilateral proposals (asylum centres). In total, 42 sources have been analysed for the first case study and 40 for the second one. For the Valletta case study, a time frame was chosen that starts one week before the summit and ends one week later (4 November – 19 November 2015), but the vast majority of sources originates from the actual summit dates (11 November – 12 November 2015). In the case of the asylum centres, data have been considered beginning in mid-June 2018 (15 June 2018) until mid-January 2019 (15 January 2019). The period more or less aligns with the Austrian EU council presidency. As the following analysis will show, this overlap is caused by the role of the proposal for the thematic orientation of the Austrian presidency.

4. "A Europe That Protects": Analysis

4.1. Migration to Europe, Common European Asylum System and the "Refugee Crisis"

4.1.1. Migration, Migrants, Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Neo-refoulement

The use of correct terminology in the field of migration is as relevant as it is often ignored. However, different terms come with significantly different definitions that not only refer to one's legal status but are statistically significant and essential in terms of (European) discourses about protection, workforce and destination. A *refugee*, in the definition of UNHCR, is

> "someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries" (UNHCR, 2019).

Refugees are seeking international protection and are protected by the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 protocol. The central principle of international protection is the principle of *non-refoulement,* which is the protection against return to a country where a person has to fear persecution (UNHCR, 1977). If the claim to be a refugee has not yet been finally decided on in the country of submission, the person is an *asylum seeker*. Every refugee is initially an asylum seeker but not vice versa. *Economic migrants* do leave their countries purely for financial and/or economic reasons. They are not persecuted and are not entitled to receive international protection. In public discourse and scholarly debate these categories are often not used distinctly and it discussed in how far this distinction is fruitful.

4.1.2. Migratory Relations Between Europe and its Former Colonies

Historically, labour migration and asylum are highly intertwined. Asylum applicants as a significant number of immigrants to Europe only play a vital role since the 1980s, until then the major pillars of immigration were guest workers and colonial migrants (Hansen, 2003). Former colonies were an important source for the former colonial powers to get unskilled workers. Especially in the case of the Commonwealth and French-Algeria, these people were given citizenship rights, but no thorough attempts of integration were made. Guestworkers especially were assumed to leave the respective host-countries when their workforce would not be demanded anymore. As Hansen argues, the public attitude towards migration was already back then one of general suspicion and rejection (Hansen, 2003: 32). Those seeking for asylum were coming mostly from Eastern European states and the Soviet Union, allowing "the West to assert, without much financial cost, its moral superiority" (Hansen, 2003: 35). Immigration was for decades strongly connected to the assumption that migration would be temporary and that migrants "would politely return to their countries of origin if and when the boom ended. […] Perhaps because Britain could harbour no such myth, immigration became

politicised much earlier in the United Kingdom" (Hansen, 2003: 29). When similar debates emerged in other European countries, the field of migration become politicised Europe-wide, and far-right parties like the Front National (FN) in France spoke of an "Immigrant takeover threat" (Hansen, 2003: 30).

4.1.3. Development of European Migration and Asylum Regimes since the 1990s

In 1989 Germany registered 100,000 refugees and more than 513,000 in 1993 (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2005). In this period Europe-wide application numbers reached almost 700,000 and declined just slowly until the end of the decade down to about 450,000 (Hansen, 2003: 35). The high numbers were due to the fall of the iron curtain and especially the Yugoslavian war.

Political responses to this new situation looked differently but led in many countries towards a more restrictive migration regime. Germany, for example, declared states *safe third countries*, which made it almost impossible to reach Germany legally via land (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2005). Already since the 1990s (in the form of the Schengen agreement and the Single European Act) asylum policy became more harmonised on the European level. In the treaty of Maastricht it was for the first time considered a topic of common interest and in 1997 the Dublin agreement, already signed in 1990, was enforced. The Treaty of Amsterdam transferred in 1999 asylum policy to a great extent to the European level, with some countries opting out (United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark). In the same year, the five-year Tampere Program was set up, establishing the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). CEAS aims at further harmonisation of policies, the establishment of common standards and cooperation (e.g. in the form of the Eurodac database) and protection of its borders while fully respecting the 1951 Geneva Convention and the principle of non-refoulement. Further, measures to tackle irregular migration and to steer migration were decided (Jahn et al., 2006). "Dublin", as part of CEAS, regulated the responsibility for the asylum application and aimed at avoiding multi-applications of a single person in various countries.

The Tampere program was succeeded by The Hague Programme (2004-2009) and the Stockholm Programme (2010-2014). These programmes aimed at the development of a common asylum system and demanded a strategic plan for legal migration as well as the effective enforcement of established measures (Jahn et al., 2006: 26; Collett, 2010). Further changes, e.g. the establishment of the co-decision procedure instead of unanimous votes in the field of legal immigration, were brought by the 2009 Lisbon treaty.

Already since the Tampere Programme, a growing connection between development, foreign and migration policy is visible. Matters like the fight of irregular migration and returns of irregular migrants are of special interest in several association agreements between European and North African states (Jahn et al., 2006: 34). Externalisation as part of the new security focus of the EU's asylum policy – something that is described as a shift from asylum policy to refugee policy (Betts & Milner, 2007: 1) – plays a vital role since the early 2000s. It appears in the 2001 Morocco-Spain migration partnership (one that was praised as exemplary later on) in the form of establishment of means of surveillance and border control as well as in the Seville European Council meeting in

the year after. Here, development conditionality was already suggested to reduce migration. Means of externalisation further appear in several later proposals and agreements "to engagement in the region of origin" that follow a logic of "separating purchaser from provider" or "common but *differentiated* responsibility-sharing" (Betts & Milner, 2007: 2). According to Betts and Millner, this approach is based on the assumption that Europe's role in the global refugee regime is mostly a supportive one, means that it should be mostly financial and be focused on funding first asylum in neighbouring states. This gives responsibility for the protection to the states within the region of origin; Europe would either compensate or pressured into this role. This approach faced critique from African states since its beginning (Betts & Milner, 2007: 3).

4.1.4. The "Refugee Crisis"

Even though refugee numbers were rising (compare figure 2) already since 2010 and especially after the Arab Spring turmoil destabilised several states in the North African and Arabic regions the situation was not perceived as "crisis" in Europe.
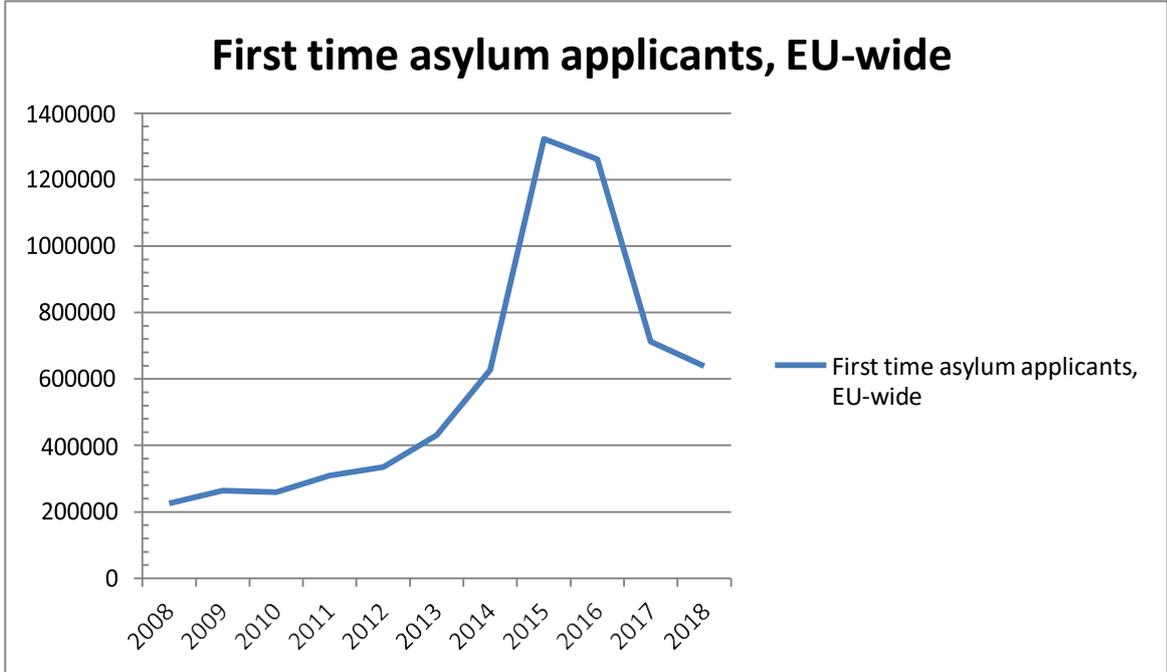
Figure 2: First time asylum applications between 2008 and 2018 (Eurostat, 2019).

This perception, however, changed dramatically in 2015 when an unprecedented number of refugees – almost a third of them from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq (Eurostat, 2019) - arrived via the Balkan route and the Mediterranean: The "crisis" narrative emerged. By erecting fences, Eastern European countries, especially Hungary, tried to shut down the migratory route. They officially succeeded in doing so in March 2016 when the EU concluded a deal with Turkey which aims at keeping refugees in Turkey (New York Times, 2016).

In August 2015, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel declared to welcome refugees despite the Dublin regulations. This caused massive opposition by other heads of states later, but not immediately. Since the end of 2015, several countries introduced border controls again, suspending the Schengen agreement. Among those were Denmark,

Sweden and later Germany, Austria and others (European Council, 2019).

While the start of the "refugee crisis" can be identified in mid-2015, it is hard to tell when it ended, or even if (the second case study will tackle this question as well). However, numbers of arriving refugees have decreased massively since then as figure two shows. Figure three shows arrivals via the Mediterranean route and its massive increase as well as decrease both in the second half of 2015. According to the UN (UNO Flüchtlingshilfe, 2019) in 2015 1,015,877 people arrived via the Mediterranean route and 363,425 (2016), 172, 324 (2017), 116,647 (2018) in the following years respectively.
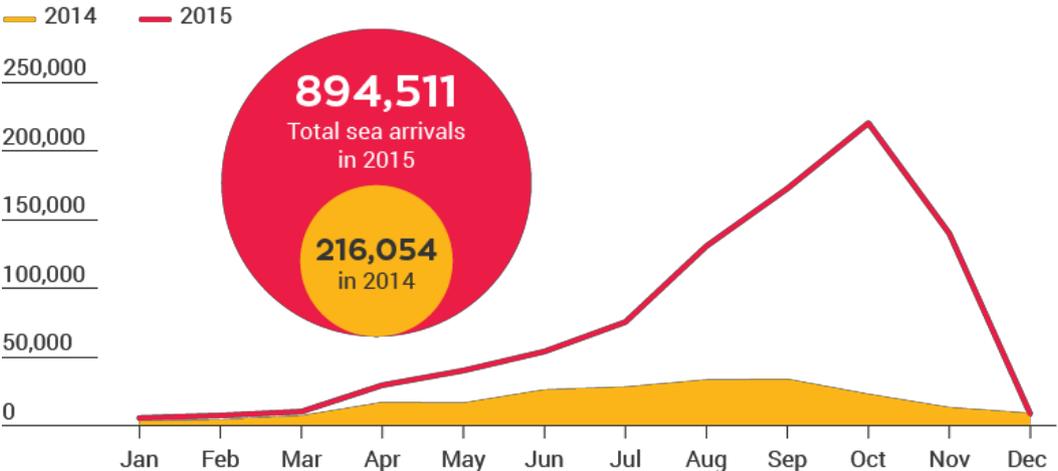
Figure 3: Refugee arrivals via the Mediterranean in 2014 and 2015 (Open Migration, 2015)

The European "refugee crisis" is part of the tense global refugee situation. UNHCR assumes that in 2017 68,5 million people were on flight; the highest number measured ever. This means one of 110 is affected by flight and forced displacement. Of these people, 52% are under 18, and 85% live in developing countries. 670,000 could return to their homes in 2017 (UNO Flüchtlingshilfe, 2019). One of the first and central reactions to the alleged crisis on European level was the Valletta Summit in November 2015.

4.2.   Between the Borders – The Valletta Summit 2015
4.2.1. The Valletta Summit

The *Valletta Summit on Migration* was planned in April 2015 after the deaths of over 800 migrants drowning in the Mediterranean on their way to Europe (BBC News, 2015). Around this time, the "crisis" perception arose. The summit itself was held in La Valletta on Malta from the 11th to 12th of November 2015 and brought together 4,000 participants from 120 countries as well as over 600 journalists. At the core of the summit was the strengthening on European-African cooperation on migration, e.g. by tying closer together the Rabat and Khartoum processes on migration and the EU-Africa Mobility partnership. The need for a summit tackling issues such as shared responsibility, exploitation, the trafficking of migrants and cooperation between the member states is reflected in the attendance of 43 heads of states and a rate of 80% of the head of

states invited attended (The Malta Independent, 2015a).

Of particular interest was the tackling of root causes, terms of legal migration, strengthening of border controls and an improved regime of readmission. The following analysis will show a significant divergence between the objectives of the European and the African side. The first part of this chapter is devoted to the first stage of CDA, description. It will analyse the development of the critical documents produced, namely the political declaration and especially the various stages of the action plan. This final document was, as it is usual for summits, prepared in previous meetings of officials from both sides and discussed and ratified at the summit. It will give an impression of the power dynamics in the negotiations reflected in the respective proposals and their implementation or rejection.

The following sections will then focus on the key themes used by both sides in documents (2.2.2.) as well as the joint summit documents and by leading politicians from African and European states (2.2.3.). By identifying the themes (and by that the narrative), the relational and expressive values will be analysed in detail and the experiential value will be in focus. The introduction of the non-European themes and perspectives will contextualise the European themes and narrative(s) and bring the analysis to the second stage of CDA, interpretation. The final chapter, a brief conclusion, will be part of the third analytical level, together with the general discussion in chapter 2.4.

It may not surprise that the aim for a summit's outcome is a "credible text, over which **both sides can claim ownership**" (Emphasis by J.B., European Council Presidency, 2015d). In this analysis, the core demands of the EU can be identified by analysing the change, appearance and disappearance of demands and by taking into account complementary documents provided by the European Council and Commission. By doing so insights will be gained how Europe generally perceives its role and which perspectives are presented in EU documents (experiential value), how the then-situation is seen and tackled (expressive value) and how relations to other parts of and partners in the world (relational value) are enacted. Being interested in the power relations between Europe and Africa, the study will present both sides' objectives. However, taking into account the availability of formal documents providing insights in the respective ambitions the obstacle occurs that such materials, while widely available on the European side, are hardly provided by the African Union and its member states. It appears that African voices are rather audible in the (following) analysis of utterances in media and speeches. It must be noted that the summit was proposed and organised by European states to "stepping up dialogue with the African Union and key countries, including through the holding of an ad hoc summit in Valletta" (European Council, 2015e) in the wake of the "refugee crisis". Hence, the summit can be seen as a reaction to

this "crisis" with the EU members finding themselves under higher pressure to deliver "solutions". As the analysis will show, this is reflected in a fundamental dichotomy: The EU itself states that "[t]he points of departure of the partners are […] quite different" (European Council Presidency, 2015d) with the European emphasis on return and readmission in order to reduce pull-factors and the African perspective on the summit as part of a broader effort to regulate migration flows and a particular focus on the creation of legal terms of migration.

4.2.2. Document Analysis: Themes in Respective and Joint Publications

A presidency note that was published about a month ahead of the summit gives an especially good impression of the EU's standpoint in the negotiations. Five key issues – or obstacles – are identified (European Council Presidency, 2015d). These are (1) the role of conditionality, (2) the terms of legal migration, (3) establishment of refugee centres, (4) short-term action and (5) fighting of criminal networks. As the note concerns the then-ongoing negotiations of the Action Plan, the following outline will integrate the note in the various stages of the drafts.

Conditionality (1) is framed in the EU language as "more-for-more" principle, "whereby additional reform efforts by partner countries were to be rewarded with additional financial and other support" European External Action Service, 2016) which has been widely criticised as a "carrot-and-stick" (Koch, 2017) approach which goes against a partnership approach. This instrument with relational value is used by the EU as a key measure in current migration policies and admittedly "in its current formulation a highly contentious aspect for most African countries" (European Council Presidency, 2015d). The EU, however, seems not to be willing to distance from its objective. Rather, it is asked: "*How explicitly should conditionality appear in the text? What alternative formulations could we explore to accommodate Africa concerns while sticking to our objectives and retaining for instance non- voluntary return as an option?*" (European Council Presidency, 2015d).

The remaining four key issues are mostly articulations of the expressive value dimension, yet it often overlaps with the experiential one. Legal migration (2) appears to be an issue for the European states as the African side complains about a lack of ambition. In the Common African Position on the Valletta Summit, deeper integration of labour migration opportunities (mostly on the African continent but also regarding Europe) plays a key role (cf. African Union, 2015). In the Action Plan for Valetta, legal migration only appears in the form of the doubling of scholarships for students, researchers and entrepreneurs, creation of workshops and launching of "pilot projects that pool offers for legal migration (e.g. for work, study, research, and vocational training) by some EU Member States or associated countries to selected African countries" (European Council Presidency, 2015a). The doubling of scholarships is initially planned to be reached by 2022. In work draft four this is changed to 2016 (European Council Presidency, 2015c). In the final Action plan, a total of three pages are dedicated to the promotion of regular channels for migration and mobility of students, researchers and entrepreneurs.

Multiple attempts can be identified that are presented as means of protection but can as well be read as attempts of externalisation: the following two main demands of (3) (a) refugee camps and (b) resettlement efforts are listed in draft three of the Action Plan in the chapter "3.1 Protection" (European Council Presidency, 2015b). In the final Action plan, four pages are dealing with protection measures (including humanitarian protection) and resettlement. While the creation of (a) camps appears in the presidency note quite visible under point three "Establishment of centres for potential asylum seekers" (European Council Presidency, 2015d) as well as in the Action Plan drafts until including version three (European Council Presidency, 2015b) this demand appears to be dropped in draft four. However, instead, the plan now aims to "strengthen **capacities of countries of first asylum, transit and destination** [and to] [e]nhance the protection capacities of

countries which are hosting large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, including security in refugee camps" (European Council Presidency, 2015a). The African objections are summarised by the EU: "this is perhaps the most controversial action in the text, to a great extent because the purpose of such centres is not clear enough in its present formulation. […]The main criticism from African partners (and also from UNHCR) is that the centres would lead to an externalisation of Europe's asylum responsibilities and, while running the risk of becoming permanent camps, would represent an extra burden for their own asylum systems which are already fragile and overburdened. Furthermore, it does not present a clear commitment from Member States to new resettlement programmes, something crucial for UNHCR" (European Council Presidency, 2015d). Regardless of these serious concerns, the presidency makes it clear to stick to the concept by posing the question: "*Is there a formulation of the concept that could cater for the concerns expressed by partners? Could we explore the link between such centres and EU resettlement commitments*?" (European Council Presidency, 2015d).

The second key demand (b) of the European side, filling two pages of the final Action Plan, is to "[s]trengthen **cooperation in order to facilitate the return and sustainable reintegration of irregular migrants**" (European Council Presidency, 2015a). From draft four on this supplemented by the attempt to "[s]trengthen the capacity of authorities of countries of **origin to respond in a timely manner to readmission applications, including through support to modernise civil registry systems and fingerprints digitalisation**" (European Council Presidency, 2015c) and to "**enhance recognition of the EU laissez passer for return purposes**" (European Council Presidency, 2015c). As for all chapters, the Action Plan includes a box with concrete action to be implemented by the end of 2016 the latest. Here, it is planned to establish "**missions by immigration officials from African countries to European countries in order to verify and identify nationalities of irregular migrants who are not in need of international protection with a view to being returned. Such identification missions will take place in the first quarter of 2016 with at least 10 African countries on a voluntary basis**" (European Council Presidency, 2015c).

All the mentioned paragraphs have been implemented in the final version except the one regarding the laissez passer. This EU travel document for return purposes was introduced in 1994 by a recommendation of the Council and aimed at simplifying the readmission of irregular migrants. However, it is alleged to give the EU the freedom to decide where a migrant with unclear nationality (e.g. because of lost or destroyed identification documents) shall be sent back to. While the text is widely rejected by African leaders, the EU is still refining the concept (AEDH, 2016). The focus on quick readmission and issuance of travel documents further is reconfirmed in the EU Council's background note published two days ahead of the summit: "Leaders are expected to make progress on return arrangements and readmission agreements. In particular, they should strengthen cooperation to facilitate the return and sustainable reintegration of irregular migrants, both from EU member states and associated countries and from African countries of transit and destination. The summit should also call for strengthening the capacity of authorities of countries of origin to respond to readmission applicants. A special emphasis is expected to be put on identification and issuance of travel documents" (European Council, 2015a). This goes clearly against the African position on protection in which "it is suggested that an Assisted Voluntary Return, Reintegration and Re-insertion Programme be embarked upon […], making voluntary return in dignity and

safety, the cardinal principle of the programme" (African Union, 2015).

While the three previous points were highly controversial, the two followings are more consensual. The need of (4) some short-term or "flagship action" is posed that "could be implemented immediately after the summit" and provide some instant success (European Council Presidency, 2015d). The establishment of the *EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa* (EUTF) can be seen as being both a quick success or flagship action and a measure to tackle underlying causes of migration. In the final document of the Action Plan, root causes (chapter one) play a central role. This rather uncontroversial chapter fills five of the total 17 pages. The listed measures focus on mainstreaming migration in development cooperation, boosting socio-economic development, strengthening resilience (especially of vulnerable groups), enhancing sustainable livelihoods and self-reliance, intensifying the ties between migrant communities and their home countries (an explicit demand by the AU) (African Union, 2015), prevention of conflicts and tackling of existing ones with a focus on the protection of human rights, supporting state building and rule of law as well as state capacities to ensure security and fight security threats. Here, an overall consensus can be stated even though the AU emphasises the facilitation of trade (African Union, 2015).

The final point of (5) fighting criminal networks (e.g. smugglers and traffickers) theoretically "remains rather consensual between the two sides" (European Council Presidency, 2015d). Yet, in practice the African side demands a better exchange of intelligence, resulting in the EU presidency's question to its own members if "*Member States [are] ready to upgrade their cooperation in the intelligence sector and to have some clear commitment in that respect*" (European Council Presidency, 2015d). In the final document, four pages list future action on prevention of and fight against irregular migration, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings.

Along the Action Plan, a Political Declaration of three pages was ratified at the summit. The declarations theme is widely following the European perception of the situation, being "**deeply concerned by the sharp increase in flows of refugees, asylum seekers and irregular migrants**" (Valletta Summit, 2015). Committed to "**international obligations and human rights**" and facing "**common challenges**" it is "**the first priority in this context is to save lives**" by "**address[ing] the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement**" and "**advance[ing] legal migration and mobility possibilities**" as well as "**strengthen[ing] the fight against irregular migration**" and "**preventing and fighting migrant smuggling, eradicating trafficking in human beings**" (All quotes are headlines from the Political Declaration, emphasised in orginal: Valletta Summit, 2015).

The document analysis reveals two opposing perceptions. The documents within the experiential and expressive value dimensions show on the side of the European Union the perception of a "crisis". Therefore, the EU executes crisis management. Crisis management is one part of the relational value; the second – the relation to "the other" – will follow below. European crisis management targets especially the number of incoming refugees. It appears that the European measures to a great extent aim at externalising and securitising (by stronger border surveillance and data collection already in countries of transit) asylum policies and border management. This is embedded in the strong theme of *protection* (saving lives and combating traffickers) and sustainable partnership to tackle root causes. Protection is especially strong as a theme due to the number of

appearances and emphasis put on within the utterances, as will be shown below. Yet, this protection shall happen in refugee camps in non- European countries, stricter border management shall tackle the recurring theme of irregular migration flows. Only one of the five chapters of the Action Plan is highly consensual (root causes), one is so in theory but suggestions how to put into practice vary (irregular migration) and three (legal migration, protection, returns and readmission) remain not only controversial but express to a much higher extent the European perception and demands – even though some of the most contentious claims get rejected during the negotiations. With the two opposing perceptions identified, it becomes visible that especially the Political Declaration is following the European themes and hence builds on the European narrative. The African push for wider channels of legal migration is based on the belief that a world with greater mobility is to the benefit of everyone (or at least the ones represented by the African heads of states) and is an expression of the experiential value. The demand is in small parts integrated only and the African narrative(s) include a theme that questions the slightly hysteric crisis management: "Faced with the daily news on what has come to be referred to as migrant crisis in Europe, we have seen the confusion and the interchangeable use of concept and terminologies such as migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers" (African Union, 2015). This evaluation of the European assessment shows indirectly the African disagreement with the EU's perception of the situation, the expressive value, therefore, is contrary to the European one. The analysis of documents reveals a certain imbalance between the two parties and gives the impression of a summit that is strongly following European demands, themes and their narrative. The following analysis of utterances, interviews and speeches will reconfirm this.

4.2.3. The Narratives' Central Themes

4.2.3.1. The European Side

What appeared in the documents as the perception of crisis is expressed in the utterances as the "race against time" (*time pressure/threat*), a recurring experiential theme: "We are determined to win that race [...] Without effective border controls, Schengen will not survive" (Euractiv, 2015)[2]. It must be noted that this theme is to a great extent used by European institution representatives, notably the Council's president Donald Tusk.

Relational values are expressed in several themes. Only to a small extent is the theme of *conditionality* used: It only is used indirectly twice, in statements by Luxembourg's then- prime-minister Xavier Bettel (Weser Kurier, 2015) and German Chancellor Angela Merkel – she offers more legal channels of migration if irregular migration is fought better and makes clear that "our future lies in the legality of the exchange and not in the financing of smugglers and traffickers" (Bundeskanzleramt, 2019). The EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs even makes it clear explicitly that "[t]here is no question of 'using development aid as exchange currency in the negotiations" (Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, 2015). One of the strongest themes in use is the one of *partnership* or *equality between the partners.* Donald Tusk says: "Migration will continue to be a politically destructive issue until true partnership is found between ourselves and others outside Europe, where each country, including our African partners, takes

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[2] see as well: European Council (2015b); The Telegraph (2015a); Weser Kurier (2015); Times of Malta (2015); EUObserver (2015b).

responsibility for its own borders and citizens. Equally, European countries have to take co-responsibility for the needs and aspirations of sending and transit countries so that we have real operational partnership on the ground, not just in the language of carefully crafted diplomatic texts" (European Council, 2015b). Commission's president Juncker highlights that Europe is depending on others (Weser Kurier, 2015) and Tusk similarly states that "[w]e have no choice but to be partners in this" (European Council, 2015c) while Angela Merkel hopes for a "companionate relationship to Africa" (Bundeskanzleramt, 2019). With such a relation (to be established) the European actors do not deny the demand for wider channels of *legal migration*, e.g. Federica Mogherini, European Parliament's then-president Martin Schulz, Donald Tusk or Stefan Löfven (Regeringskansliet, 2015; European External Action Service, 2015). This, however often comes along with the restriction that not everyone could come to Europe, so refugees and migrants should be *protected at home* and *returns and readmission must be enforced better*, one of the most used expressions. Protection at home is expressed among others by Maltese prime-minister Muscat, stating that "[t]he aspirations and needs of these people have to be met, first and foremost, at home" (The Malta Independent, 2015b) or by Donald Tusk (European Council, 2015c). Swedish prime-minister Stefan Löfven says: "[T]he refugee situation in several countries in Europe is becoming unsustainable. […] a credible policy on irregular migration and return is a must because return arrangements and readmissions agreements remain necessary parts of a functioning migration system" (Regeringskansliet, 2015)[3]. It must be noted that this theme especially, but also the European statements on legal terms of migration, mix up (labour) migration and refugees. In this context, a close confidant of Donald Tusk Pierre Vimont is reported to state that "the African leaders have to understand EU internal on migration problems" as security would be a very sensitive topic (Afronline, 2015b).

Themes containing the expressive value dimension give an impression of the European perception of an appropriate reaction to the "crisis". Hence, the expressive value expresses the pro-active side of the whole narrative: These themes describe and explain the action that has to be taken and the form of it within the meaningful narrative paradigm. They build on the experience of the current migratory situation that is perceived as a threat. This covers on the one side the demand to *tackle the root causes* as expressed by Norwegian prime-minister Solberg ("we must develop a long-term strategy to address the root causes of migration") (Government.no, 2015), Jean-Claude Juncker, Martin Schulz and others (IRIN, 2015). It comes as no surprise that the EUTF is praised to "help us - working together - to offer the peoples of Africa a better future" (European Council, 2015b)[4]. In the European actor's narrations, the fund appears to bring together the tackling of root causes and the demanded flagship action. However, while the fund is euphorically praised, another theme containing evaluations of the current situation appears to be much stronger, in fact as one of the strongest on the European side: The theme to *close migratory routes*, in particular, the Mediterranean route. This includes both to fight traffickers and smugglers and the protection of European borders. Both aspects are highlighted by various political leaders and the already mentioned top diplomat Vimont calling it a "strong, security-heavy response" (Weser Kurier, 2015; Government.no, 2015; Grand Duchy of Luxembourg; 2015; Bundeskanzleramt, 2018; EUObserver, 2015a). A

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[3] see as well: European Council (2015d); Grand Duchy of Luxembourg (2015).
[4] See as well: European Parliament (2015); Bundeskanzleramt (2019); Afronline (2015a).

special role within the EU is taken by the Visegrad Group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia). For them, protection of European borders is paramount, migration is perceived as threat only (The Visegrad Group, 2015). The position of the group is summed up by Hungary's prime-minister Orbán, saying Europe "has abandoned its plan, dream and obligation of being capable of protecting its own borders by its own powers" and became "a beggar pleading for security from someone else" (Daily Mail, 2015).[5]

Generally, securitisation plays a crucial role, especially in this theme. It seems to be a shared position among the European leaders that the border must be better controlled and protected. Along with the securitisation migration and border crossing comes the criminalisation of those being perceived as not being eligible to protection on European grounds. This reconnects again to the first theme of migration "flows" as a threat to European stability. This can help to explain the ambiguity of the theme of *protection,* which is used actively by European actors from both the institutions and nation-states (Government.no, 2015; Regeringskansliet, 2015; European Parliament, 2015; European Council, 2015c; European Council, 2015d). Its function is a connecting one: On the contentual level, it has the role to reconfirm the value-based actor Europe: Human rights shall be respected, state functions strengthened. It also justifies particular action like the demanded protection of refugees "at home" (European Council, 2015c; The Malta Independent, 2015b) as well as the securitisation of the Mediterranean in general. With the securitisation becoming an essential means of protection it portends a double function: Not only asylum seekers and refugees have to be protected, but also Europe has to be protected (see threat theme above). In this case, then, it is the protection from "flows of refugees" (Valletta Summit, 2015) and the threat of terrorism, poverty etc. that are feared to come with the people. On the analytical level, "protection" brings together all three central values: It indicates a specific (or rather two) experience of the world, namely being under threat, both on the individual as well as on the continental level. It also integrates the expressive value by showing a certain evaluation and justifies action and the enactment of different relations. The manifold functions of this umbrella-phrase show exemplary not only that a neocolonial pattern of thinking exists but how it works: The European definitions of protection dominate the documents and justify an explicitly European way of dealing with the situation, the African definition of protects, much more aiming on the personal level, is not strong enough. A further discussion of the neocolonial dimension will follow below.

Almost all narrative themes come together in Erna Solberg's speech at the Summit. Only legal channels of migration (as shown above not of high priority for the European side) and conditionality (as being a theme too controversial to bring it up in the speech) don't appear:

> "This summit takes place in an extraordinary situation. And it is extraordinarily important. […] Europe is now faced with a major migration and refugee challenge. […] Let me highlight two areas that are critical: Firstly: We need to combat criminal networks that are running the illegal refugee and migrant business. They are cynically exploiting women, men and children and putting them at great risk. Secondly: We need closer cooperation on the return of nationals who do not qualify

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[5] This statement was made towards Turkey but is exemplary for Orbáns stance and was made during the Valletta Summit.

for asylum or protection. This is based on international law and existing agreements. Otherwise, we risk undermining the whole asylum institute. We risk migrants being absorbed into black market economies where they have few rights or opportunities. And we risk having to reduce aid budgets for long-term development because we are overwhelmed by the needs at home. […]This extraordinary situation requires a two-fold response. First, we must address the immediate problem: the large-scale irregular migration by land and by sea. We must save lives and protect those in need. […] Second, we must develop a long-term strategy to address the root causes of migration" (Government.no, 2015).

Solberg's speech fulfils all aspects of a narrative: It creates a chain of events that work together, addresses values and identity (in the form of Europe's obligation to provide protection) and hence delivers a meaningful narrative paradigm. Almost all themes that are considered forming the narrative appear.

4.2.3.2.   African Perspectives

The central themes of African leaders oppose the European perception of the situation. The following themes used on the African side of the negotiations will contextualise the European position further and reveal more about the discourse and power balance as well as the respective narratives within.

Besides the core demand of *legal migration* (as presented in the documents as well as in speech acts by the AU's ambassador to the EU Ajay Bramdeo or an Egyptian representative) (Government of Egypt, 2015; The Telegraph, 2015a), most themes are particularly EU-critical. Critique can be identified in the wish for a more *independent Africa*, with the heads of states of Somalia and Senegal (the then-chairman of the "Economic Community of West African States" and informal speaker of African countries at the summit, Macky Sall) demanding investment instead of development aid and other leaders rejecting charity (The Telegraph, 2015b).

The critique's explicitness is striking, and the African self-confidence came as a surprise for at least some Europeans (Weser Kurier, 2015). It is expressed, that *Europe does not enough* by several participants, especially regarding the EUTF: "The fund is, of course, not enough. What is 1 billion euros?" (BizNews.Com, 2015). Some African representatives urge the *end of exploitation*. It is again Sall, who criticises unequal terms of trade: "We have sufficient resources in Africa, we could do without aid. […] This is a combat that we have been taking everywhere, taking it to G7 to G20 to the United Nations and we've also raised this here" EUObserver, 2015b). The end of exploitation also refers to another central theme, the alleged *Eurocentrism.* This is especially strong expressed by an official stating ahead of the summit that "there is no dialogue. What we are seeing from the EU is a monologue that seeks only to impose its own agenda." Macky Sall said that "[r]eadmission is a difficult subject - we can't just have this discussion from the European perspective" (The Telegraph, 2015a). Similar sounds the chairwoman of the African Union, Dlamini-Zuma, in her opening remarks delivered at the beginning of the summit where she speaks about securitisation a strengthening of European borders, sometimes referred to as Fortress Europe: "There is no part of the world that can be a fortress. We should be open to legal migration" (AU Commission Chairperson, 2015). While one states that "[t]here was very little trust between the sides [and] there was a lot of

tension over the way that the EU handled this" (The Guardian, 2015b), another high diplomat says undiplomatically direct that the "Europeans are not exactly visionaries […] And they don't realise that they are no longer the centre of the world" (The Guardian, 2015a).

Along the critique of Eurocentrism comes the notion that *Europe is externalising its problems*. The diplomat quoted in the paragraph above also says: "They say it's all about Europe externalising and outsourcing its own problems" (The Guardian, 2015a). Dlamini-Zuma is in strict opposition to refugee camps (AU Commission Chairperson, 2015); Eritrean foreign minister Saleh Osman says: "whatever their motivations, European countries have followed policies that have fed irregular migration, harmed Eritrea as well the interests of the destination countries themselves" (TesfaNews, 2015) Ajay Bramdeo called the EUTF "an insult to Africa" and stated that "conditionality is not in the action plan, but it's still on the table" (Afronline, 2015b).

The African experience (experiential value) of the situation is not the one of a crisis, but the one of the EU being in a crisis mode that pushes hard for certain – as Eurocentric perceived – solutions (The Telegraph, 2015b). Migration is rather seen (expressive) as the result of an unequal global system, in the African perception Europe, therefore, is as well responsible for the current problems (TesfaNews, 2015). The proposed solution is then more legal migration as well as deeper regional African integration and fairer terms of cooperation. It appears in the African utterances that the unbalanced relationship persists (relational) and therefore hinders actual cooperation. African objections and the clear stance of its leaders are not lessened by the fact that of course agreement on specific measures and perception existed.

Fairclough writes that "participants in any discourse operate on the basis of assumptions about which previous (series of) discourses the current one is connected to, and their assumptions determine what can be taken as given in the sense of part of common experience, what can be alluded to, disagreed with, and so on" (Fairclough, 2001: 121). In the here analysed case, it would mean that African representatives are familiar with the European approach towards regional and border policies. Vice versa, this means that several themes used by the European representatives are detected as not, or at least less, credible in the discursive context: This applies especially to the "partnership" theme, but also to "tackling the root causes". The context delivered by the African side hints towards a discursive structure significantly different from how European officials suggest it to be. Tackling root causes definitely appears in the ratified documents. However, their overall structure and content show that the – accused as Eurocentric – measures to securitise the border and establish stricter readmission regimes are paramount for the European side and that European actors – willingly or unconsciously – build on existing unequal power relations to push through their demands. That the power relations and their unbalanced nature can be traced back to colonial times appears irrelevant for the European actors, David Cameron's acknowledgement of Britain's "huge and historic" (The Telegraph, 2015a) role in the migration crisis remains the exception. As outlined above in numerous quotes, for the African side, the kind of the power relation is, naturally, much more visible. Criticising this and bringing in own strong demands appear to be already enough to surprise at least some European delegations (see quote above from Austrian delegation).

4.2.4. Conclusion

The question must be asked how deliberately European representatives construct the narratives that appear in the analysis. However, willingly or unconsciously, the themes and consequently the narrative follow an argumentation in which the European actors do what they can to protect but reach limits – which is why protection must be happening in countries of origin or transit, in any case on the other side of the Mediterranean. This would only be reached if irregular (often enough referred to as illegal) migration is tackled by means of securitisation. A notion of threat is created. Specific themes work with a justification and explanation function. The narrative can be dissected into the various analytical value dimensions to study its meaningful narrative paradigm. Some themes are challenged – sometimes, yet rarely, even from within the European Union (Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, 2015) – by African state's different track of argumentation. Yet, the document analysis shows an overweight in the European direction. A narration is constructed, which build heavily on human rights obligations and justification for the own action. The aim for the European representatives appears to be a position for Europe in which it would not be immune or even invulnerable. The taken action, then, would be in the interest of own protection as well as in the African interest(s), as the narration of partnership is strong. The African demands for more real partnership (one that is less "top-down") and more focus on legal migration, though, are underrepresented.

What stands out is that the European narrative is highly coherent. Within the chosen data set, few, almost no, critical or alternative paths within the European bloc appeared. The argumentation – or narrative –, however, would not be without any alternatives. Not involved parties on left of the political spectrum offer alternatives, those on the right end push in the opposite direction (towards further fortification) and civil society organisations and NGO's have well-supported arguments for and against specific policies. However, only two of such organisations received a last-minute invitation to the summit.

The picture emerges of European representatives trying to receive results that can be sold as success in their home countries and indeed, solely from their perspective, the EU was not unsuccessful at the summit. However, looking at the power relations indicates that European actors often are not following what they promote. Frankly, they try to play out their power position against the African side and arguably as well against civil society organisations.

This, then, is neocolonial in the sense that Europe tries to keep the interpretational sovereignty and reaches a number of actions or at least formulations that are one-sided protections of particular interest but not in a "companionable" way: Potential alternatives, which would deal with the so-called migration crisis in a very different manner, are never negotiated seriously. The "track" on which European representatives perceive the situation and try to find suiting solutions may be determined intensively by internal politics. This point will be elaborated in the second case study. With this limited radius of action, European negotiators may not even be able anymore to consider alternative solution approaches and in this sense it may not even be wrong or ignorant if, as quoted above, a European diplomat expects the other side to understand the sensibility of the security topic within the European context. This, however, may not justify a visible Eurocentrism in the negotiations. These policies contain neocolonial elements; especially the "more-for-more" principle that generally plays an important role in foreign and development policies must be mentioned here. It also holds true for the

European proposals to define the terms of readmission up until the decision to which country people shall be deported as well as the attempted establishment of measures of protection that predominantly follow the EU's attempt to protect itself.

Attempts to impose policies in the interest of Europe – with a clear lack of a reflection of African demands and positions – based on the underlying assumption to protect the entity Europe against a "threat" or "flood" that should be handled regionally (and be carried back as much as possible as the demand for further regimes of returns underline) in the areas of crisis are covered by the definitions delivered above. The pressuring for specific border protection regimes at the borders between (North) African countries in combination with bilateral deals or – even more fundamental for the states concerned – with security measures that affect the respective nations security (e.g. in form of technically and military cooperation) reflect once again the exertion of foreign influence that affects the respective national sovereignty.

However, the sometimes alleged claim of Europe as the imperialistic project would be rejected in this context. The means of imperialist or neocolonial force are just not intense enough to justify such a strong denotation. Concerns are still considered by the European actors, African demands get – even though to a fairly small extent – part of the joint agreements and EU and its diplomats may therefore not be insinuated of a political practice that equals depletion of European values and human rights. This also means that, while certain neocolonial elements can be found, their expression is not extremely strong.

4.3. The 2018 Proposal of Disembarkation Platforms

The second case study will focus on the debate among leading European politicians about the planned establishment of asylum centres in North Africa. As already the prior analysis showed this idea does not appear for the first time in 2018. Already in 2003, the British then- prime-minister Tony Blair presented a "new vision for refugees" introducing the concept to check refugees' claims on non-European ground. The idea was picked up by the former German minister for internal affairs (and as Social Democrat close to Blair's Labour party) one year later. Again ten years later his successor (from the conservative CDU) presented the idea of "welcoming centres" (Pro Asyl, 2016). Despite harsh reactions from human rights organisations, questions about legality and compatibility with European values and never-reached majorities, the idea was on the table again at the Valletta Summit, as discussed above. In 2018 the alleged solution celebrated a comeback on an unprecedented scale. While the idea appears to enjoy quite some popularity among leading politicians, it is remarkable how unclear the concept remains until today. Few elaborations have been undertaken to develop a proper concept.

The idea was discussed intensively from about mid-June 2018 on again. Therefore, this marks the starting point for the analysis. A seven-month timeframe (until the end of the council presidency Austria was holding from mid-July on) has been chosen. The detection and study of the main themes and hence the narrative will be structured according to the analytical levels outlined and used above already: the study will first look at the circumstances under which the proposal had its comeback, giving insights into the experiential value. It will further look at the central claims made. This will present the expressive value from the European point of view. The speech acts will as well reveal the assumed relation to third countries, which is the relational value dimension. In the following, the context will be delivered by an examination of reactions from African states and a concluding discussion will follow. Utterances, interviews and speeches gathered via media articles as well as official documents have been analysed. Advantages, downsides and the need for this procedure have been discussed above.

4.3.1. Aims and Narratives in European Migration Policy in 2018
The "Emergency" summit in June

Compared to 2015, the political landscape in Europe did change noticeably: new right-wing governments got elected (Italy, Austria and others); an apparent polarisation in questions of asylum and migration policies between Germany, France and others on the one side and the Visegrad-states on the other became apparent and migration and asylum regimes shifted towards stricter policies, e.g. in Germany or Sweden. In late June especially, the German chancellor Merkel was under pressure by her conservative Minister for Interior Affairs Horst Seehofer, threatening to close the border to Austria if Merkel would not come to a European solution for the handling of incoming refugees. Under this impression, a council meeting, yet another "Emergency summit", on migration was arranged. Again, the alleged threat was pointed out, Merkel stated that "Europe faces many challenges but migration could become the fateful question for the European Union" (Translation by J.B., Bundeskanzleramt, 2018). In a draft (and later the actual conclusion) of the council conclusion for the first time appears the concept of asylum centres, now called *disembarkation platforms*: "the European Council supports the development of the concept of regional disembarkation platforms in close cooperation

with UNHCR and IOM. Such platforms should provide for rapid processing to distinguish between economic migrants and those in need of international protection, and reduce the incentive to embark on perilous journeys" (European Council, 2018a). Adopting the conclusion was delicate as some member states were opposing a common European approach towards the governance of the "refugee crisis", especially the just-elected Italian Prime Minister Conte was opposing the proposal which, in the case of failing, might have had cost Merkel her position as Chancellor. French president Macron supported Merkel massively and guaranteed the adoption of the conclusion (Spiegel Online, 2018b), the firing of the starting pistol for the promotion of disembarkation platforms.

4.3.1.1.   Disembarkation Platforms in European Documents

The concept of disembarkation platforms has been explored in few official documents. As stressed by the mentioned Council conclusion, such camps would need to be set up in close cooperation with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR. When presented in June, the Council voted to establish disembarkation platforms both within the EU and outside. Interestingly enough, the proposal is addressed towards the EU only, calling for the establishment of a regional cooperative arrangement "in EU territory and potentially elsewhere" (International Organization for Migration, 2018). This analysis will be focused on the platforms in third-countries. While pointing out some core principles and essential objectives, the joint statement remains rather vague. IOM and UNHCR elaborated on the concept, acknowledging "a need to revisit regional arrangements to relieve front line states from having the sole responsibility for the disembarkation and further processing of people rescued at sea" as it "is increasingly recognized that disembarkation cannot be the sole responsibility of one country or regional grouping. It should be a shared responsibility across the Mediterranean Basin" (International Organization for Migration, 2018). Hence, they "call on all countries in the Mediterranean region to come together to implement a predictable and responsible disembarkation mechanism in a manner that prioritizes human rights and safety first" (International Organization for Migration, 2018). Core aims of the proposed regional cooperation are (1) strengthening of protection capacities in regions of origin, (2) providing sufficient needs-based support for humanitarian operations, (3) expanding opportunities for resettlement, (4) family reunification and (5) safe and regular pathways for refugees.

The proposal calls for quick disembarkation in an orderly manner being in line with international maritime law and upholding the right of non-refoulement to reach "effective differentiated solutions and reduces onward movement" (International Organization for Migration, 2018). Doing this would follow principles such as (among others) (1) maximising efforts to reduce loss of life at sea; (2) strengthening capacities of coast guards; (3) quick disembarkation of the rescued in a predictable manner in line with established rescue at sea arrangements and international maritime law, coordinated through the responsible National Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres (MRCC); (4) introduction of cooperative measures to support States providing for disembarkation; (5) safeguarding the right to seek asylum as well as the human rights of all individuals and (6) establishing efforts to address human smuggling and trafficking are reinvigorated. The search for right places would – according to IOM and UNHCR – look as follows: "The determination of places of disembarkation at presently utilized and additional pre-identified disembarkation centres in EU territory and potentially elsewhere should be

based on a geographic distribution with due consideration for available capacities in such identified centres, and in a manner that ensures respect for human rights, including respect for the safety and dignity of all people on the move, and the principle of non-refoulement" (International Organization for Migration, 2018).

Within the centres then should be provided a number of services "in order to address the basic material and psychosocial needs of all arrivals, including by providing access to adequate safe drinking water, sanitation, food, nutrition, shelter, psychosocial support and immediate health care, with a particular emphasis on persons with specific needs, including children and their best interest assessment. All will undergo immediate **biometric registration**, in compliance with applicable international standards – for which UNHCR and IOM could provide support - and **security screening** would be carried out by the competent national authorities with adequate monitoring and protection safeguards. […] Processing for international protection will occur in line with international, and as applicable, existing national and / or regional standards, and depending on the place of disembarkation, could be carried out by the concerned State alone or supported by UNHCR as need be" (International Organization for Migration, 2018).

Of particular relevance for the study of platforms outside EU territory is the paragraph that elaborates on people being disembarked in third-countries: "[S]olutions would include third country resettlement and humanitarian admission, in addition to family reunification, local solutions where possible as well as voluntary repatriation and reintegration in their home country, as appropriate. Support by the international community, led by UNHCR, would be strengthened to build national asylum systems, inclusive of laws and operational protection Responses" (International Organization for Migration, 2018).

Based on this proposal, the EU institutions provided few, insightful, documents. In a non- paper (European Commission, 2018b), source of the following quotes, the Commission points out two essential objectives: First, the respect of international law would remain at the core of all action. The second one stresses the role of the support of "all concerned actors" and cooperation with UNHCR and IOM. In the following, the reduction of pull-factors and the limited possibilities of resettlement are highlighted along with the suggestion of measures "to prevent persons who have been returned from re-entering the third country in question. This could be supported through targeted communication, awareness campaigns and enhanced border management." The action to take is reasoned with the "genuine regional dimension to disembarkation", making it "an important element of shared responsibility, trust-building and credibility".

Chapter 2 highlights key principles for the outreach to third countries, stating that "[i]nvolvement of the partner country upstream in the development of the concept in a spirit of partnership is key" as well as the need for clear communication: "it should be clearly explained that regional disembarkation arrangements represent a set of established procedures and rules stemming from existing international obligations to ensure safe and orderly disembarkation and post-disembarkation. Any misperceptions about the concept must be addressed through dialogue with partners". Finally, the development of the platforms is connected to existing development funding from the European side, presenting the EU essentially as a supporting actor: "the outreach should include tailor-made and targeted packages building on already existing EU and Member States' support. The EU offer will be designed to the interest of third countries to cooperate and is to be

closely coordinated with offers of Member States."

On the analytical level of the experiential (the experience of the world) and expressive (the proposed reactions) value dimensions, the narrative is presenting the EU as supporting actor, whose role would be to help other Mediterranean states shouldering their obligation of protection. The financial instruments by which the EU provided support are presented and generously it is offered "to provide more political, operational and financial support in view of establishing regional disembarkation arrangements in close cooperation with third-country partners, UNHCR and IOM." This support could, for example, mean that the EU covers the costs or intensify cooperation in fields of border management, capacity building or building asylum systems. It could also include a number of the EU member states' resettlement pledges being "used for resettlement in the context of regional disembarkation arrangements." (European Commission, 2018b). The non-paper concludes with a number of next steps, most remarkably to "[d]efine outreaching strategy and common messages towards each potential partner country on the basis of discussion with interested EU Member States".

Besides the non-paper, the Commission provides a follow-up to the Council conclusion, called "Migration: Regional Disembarkation Arrangements" (European Commission, 2018a) where the following quotes are from. It again outlines the shared responsibility and the need for "quick and safe disembarkation on both sides of the Mediterranean […] in line with international law, including the principle of non-refoulement." As well, the theme of partnership is strongly expressed saying that disembarkation platforms "should be seen as working in concert with the development of controlled centres in the EU: together, both concepts should help ensure a **truly shared regional responsibility** in replying to complex migration challenges" (European Commission, 2018a). The paper highlights that such platforms can only be functioning if "clear rules for all" exist and the surveillance of the Mediterranean in the form of Search and Rescue (SAR) action and coordination of MRCCs is intensified, in other words, if the border management is further securitised. Just as in the non-paper, it is a crucial element to reduce pull factors. Another of these elements is that the arrangements would not be camps. EU as a supporting actor is again emphasised by pointing out five fields of "**financial and operational support for disembarkation and post-disembarkation activities** as well as for border management" (European Commission, 2018a).

Disembarkation platforms were not discussed at the Council meeting in October 2018, but the conclusion (European Council, 2018b) gives a good insight into European preferences within the respective field. While the heads of states acknowledge "the number of detected illegal border crossings into the EU has been brought down by 95% from its peak in October 2015" the priorities are still further prevention of illegal border crossings, the fight of smuggling and human-trafficking and especially on enforcing higher numbers of returns. This includes harmonised and increased border surveillance and an emphasis on expanded regional partnership, especially with North African countries, considering that these are "of paramount importance in a rapidly changing global landscape".

For the analysis of the narrative(s) used on the European side, a joint vision-paper by Austria and Denmark (Austrian Ministry of Interior Affairs and Ministry of Immigration and Integration of Denmark, 2018)[6] provides relevant insights. This, in early October

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[6] The following quotes stem from this paper only.

published, paper "cannot refer to every detail,[but] ensures a common direction. It is a compass - it should ensure that we, for the first time, strive towards the same long-term goal." With this aim, and building on the Council conclusion from June, this somewhat controversial document gives insight into perception (experiential value) and potential solutions (expressive value). In the beginning, it outlines several premises: (1) Migration brings change for everyone, (2) citizens have lost in the asylum system because of (3) irregular migration and the fact that (4) Europe has lost control over who is crossing its borders. (5) Hence, a new system, a new vision, has to be found that reassures the citizens and also "meets our legal and ethical obligations, and is sufficiently prudent to avoid a legacy of regrets." (6) Further, the 1951 Refugee Convention is accused of being dysfunctional by promoting "transcontinental, economically induced secondary migration" and being a central pillar of a system that (7) rewards fraud. This system would be abused by organised criminal networks. The narrative of the paper is concluded in the following paragraph:

> "The criminal networks rely upon appeals to the moral conscience of Europeans, suggesting that we are collectively guilty of the resulting death and despair; suggesting that it is our duty to offer permanent integration to all the people criminals have lured into taking perilous land routes or boat journeys across the Mediterranean. In such a Darwinist system the fittest and not the most vulnerable are rewarded. We are faced with a tragic humanitarian situation that results in the loss of thousands of lives every year. We cannot accept this any longer. We must prevent this unnecessary death and suffering, while ensuring that our asylum and migration policies are sustainable. This is why our highest ethical and political priorities are to develop a better protection system for a globalized world."

The paper develops a narrative based on several themes that can be considered common-sense within the European canon of values – e.g. the protection of vulnerable. However, the consequence that is taken from the outlined experience (experiential value) implies a new concept for migration policies that builds actively on externalisation. This is reflected in the seven goals that are described in the document. (1) Helping and identifying better the most vulnerable. (2) "Help to create perspectives in regions of origin instead of enabling irregular migration to Europe" wants to reinforce support for countries of first reception. (3) calls for stronger border surveillance, phrasing it "Prevent further deaths and tragedies in the Mediterranean and along the migratory routes". Via stronger asylum and migration authorities along with the routes traffickers and smugglers shall be combated. (4) The establishment of efficient SAR frameworks together with the disembarkation platforms shall further break their business. (5) calls explicitly for more efficient border management and demands all people staying illegally in Europe to leave, primarily via a strengthened return system. To reduce opportunities for migrants coming to Europe this formulation is crucial: "Circumvention of protection opportunities ("safe havens") along migratory routes should no longer be feasible and shall be taken into account in the national refugee determination systems." (6) calls for differentiated yet solidary responsibility sharing with every state having a choice how to show support. (7) Only "[o]nce irregular movement is reduced and public trust restored" safe and legal pathways for resettlement in Europe shall be created. These seven goals are considered the expressive value dimension.

The above-analysed documents on EU-level already revealed a shift in perception, in the experiential value, which frames the situation firmly as a burden for African countries

with the EU being a supportive force rather than an inherent part of the situation. The European role then looks as follows: "This dual task of bringing jobs to refugees, and improved conditions and enhanced economic opportunities to host populations, is the primary obligation of European countries as far as refugees are concerned." In this context, the positive role of globalisation is emphasised as "it can bring jobs to safe havens", an utterance that is quite ironic, if not sarcastic, as the whole narrative aims at a disconnection from effects of globalisation and greater responsibility for developments in African and Arabic regions. This point appears between the lines in all steps of the narratives argumentation, for example, when it is elaborated that the 1951 convention is enforced wrongly by supporting secondary migration. Enforcing it correctly in the understanding of the paper would both strengthen and be strengthened by the principle of common-but-differentiated responsibility-sharing, which means "mandatory solidarity instead of mandatory allocation." However, this creates as well high obstacles for asylum seekers to apply within the European Union, openly stated in the paper as: "Implementation of step 1 to 4 will lead to a significant drop in asylum applications in the EU. This limited future number of applications must be made at the external border. At hotspots, people will be registered, fingerprinted and screened for security reasons. However, *this does not mean they have the right to enter the European Union.*"[7]

The vision paper elaborates its perception of the current migration situation excessively (experiential value) as well as its solutions (expressive value) without giving space to the third-countries' perspectives or any other expression of the relational value. Frankly spoken, third-countries play only a role a base for European self-protection measures.

Again, all dimensions create together a meaningful narrative paradigm that transports a particular set of values and emotions oriented towards the own cultural environment and political landscape solely. By doing this, the narrative first and foremost has a political function that is not necessarily carrying the truth. Above it had been quoted: "The narrative, it seems, reigns in its realm omnipotent and without commitment; it does not have to worry about congruence with external reality; it takes the liberty of declaring everything and everyone to be an object in the world. […] Elements of truth, appearance, hearsay, ignorance, error and lies mix in it like in a vortex" (Koschorke, 2012: 12). The following section will further detect the functioning and elements of the European migration narrative, focusing on spoken utterances and interviews. By this, it will add to the narrative's picture and its narration before the context will be analysed and a summary on the analytical stage of explanation will be presented.

4.3.1.2. Themes in Utterances and Interviews

Various themes appear in the statements of European politicians, that mostly support the narrative(s) from the documents with some being stronger or somewhat different in spoken word and interviews.

During the period of examination, June 2018 until January 2019, the situation appears not to be perceived as a crisis anymore. Within the data sample that is focused on utterances and statements related to the disembarkation platforms, the overall situation (experiential value) is not described as a migration crisis, e.g. Donald Tusk states

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[7] Italics by J.B.

Europe is past the crisis mode from three years ago (dpa-AFX, 2018). Yet, the unanimity of the European voices does not exist anymore: "So in this respect I'm satisfied, but I don't understand why, in the absence of a real crisis, with such huge dramatism, until 5 am, we stay to adopt decisions. So that every prime minister could come back home as a winner, this is the fashion" (Euractive, 2018), states Bulgaria's Boyko Borissov. EU Commissioner Avramopoulos, responsible for migration summarises that "we're not in a migration crisis mode. We are in a political crisis mode" (ASC Media, 2018). Hence, Europe is in an *internal crisis mode*, due to pressure from strongly migration critical governments. This internal crisis indeed let to a highly precarious moment with the summit in June describes as "make or break" for the EU (Express.co.uk, 2018).

Holding the Council's presidency usually gives the respective state the opportunity to point out successes on the European level. Hence, it is no surprise that Austrian politicians actively market their presidency as bringing a *paradigm shift* (dpa-AFX, 2018). Austria, claiming for itself to build bridges between the opposing groups within the EU, put particular emphasis indeed on the securitisation of external borders and tried to move away from the "sole focus on the distribution of refugees within Europe" (Die Welt, 2019).

In 2018, the fight against *irregular* – mostly named *illegal – migration* (expressive value dimension) indeed plays a central role in the governance of migration on EU-level. Terminology at this point already indicates from which angle this discussion is conducted. The EU's DG for migration and home affairs writes: Due to […] the association with criminality the term 'illegal migration' should be avoided, as most irregular migrants are not criminals. Being in a country without the required papers is, in most countries, not a criminal offence but an administrative infringement" (European Commission, 2019).

Despite this suggestion, in the elite discourse, the term "illegal" is strongly dominating. It can be read as a special emphasis to underline again the need to block the "illegal migration flows" as a threat for Europe. This threat, coming from the outside, endangers the EU also from within as it is an issue that should be solved and not used for political gain, as Donald Tusk states (The Arab Weekly, 2018b). Especially for the Austrian presidency, as already mentioned, the fight against illegal migration is crucial and pointed out at every occasion (Die Welt, 2019). What is described as the old focus of European migration politics – the emphasis on internal distribution and secondary movement – fades into the background. It is only mentioned by western-European states being profoundly affected by secondary migration (cf. States News Service, 2018) but not by those on the edges of the EU.

What has to be done to reach this primary goal and how? This "how" is of relational (but also expressive) character. A *European solution* is still highlighted by the avowed Europeans Macron and Merkel and as well by the EU minister of Austria (under the condition of strong external border protection) (States News Service, 2018; The Financial Post, 2018; Bundeskanzleramt, 2018; Deutschlandfunk, 2018). A European solution implies the European actors talking with a single voice in negotiations with third countries. With these, European actors aim for *cooperation in partnership*. Statements underlying the European commitment to partnership are legion, e.g. Chancellor Merkel stating that "we must not only talk about African states but we have to try […] to come to agreements with [them] which are in their interest as well" (translation here and in the following by J.B., Bundeskanzleramt, 2018). Similar sounding statements were delivered by Mogherini (Plus Media Solutions, 2018a), Kurz and Macron (The Arab Weekly, 2018b) and others.

Tusk brings in the EUTF (still not filled with the promised amount of money) as "the best proof of our intentions, despite unfounded claims that Europe wants to abandon Africa. It is impossible to stop the flow of illegal migrants without close cooperation with African countries. That is why we will use all possible tools, from defence and development to visa and other cooperation, to make it happen" (TendersInfo, 2018).

Respect for the partner could not be implied without respect for the own *values*: "Either we manage this in a way that they in Africa believe we are guided by values and that we trust in multilateralism instead of unilateralism or no one will ever believe in our values that made us so strong anymore. And that's way there is a lot at stake" (Bundeskanzleramt, 2018). This is reaffirmed by for example Avramopoulos, Macron and the EP's liberal faction leader Guy Verhofstadt (ASC Media, 2018; Baltimore Sun, 2018; The Daily Star, 2018). The importance of values gets an interesting twist in Austrian EU minister Blümel's interview

where he declares the issue of protection solely a value matter and not a legal one and, therefore, implicitly rejecting this important link between values and their manifestation in legal terms: "To care for people, to bring them to safety, is not a question of law, it is a pure question of humanity" (Associated Press, 2018).

A value-based European solution in partnership with Africa to fight irregular migration is the aim (experiential and expressive) and the measures to reach this goal and the alleged paradigm shift are to *securitise the external border* and *externalise controls* and other means of security. How exactly this shall be implemented, however, is presented differently by various sides. Tusk stands for rather moderate measures: "In order to bolster our common defence, the EU will enhance investment, capability development and operational readiness." (TendersInfo, 2018) Macron goes in a similar direction: "Indeed, we have an area of free movement and all the advantages of this. If we want to protect our fellow citizens more effectively, which is what we're looking to do, we've got to invest and organize ourselves better to protect our common borders" (States News Service (2018). The Austrian Chancellor Kurz declares that "[w]e've got to ensure that as few people as possible leave northern African countries for Europe. If they do, the situation should be dealt with as close to the African coast as possible," "NGOs sometimes fall into an informal kind of arrangement with the smugglers" (Associated Press, 2018). It appears that only Frontex (EUObserver, 2018) and the respective (especially Libyan) coastguards shall operate in the Mediterranean: Just this would ensure the end of trafficking and irregular migration. Here, however, it is an interesting detail that the increase of Frontex officers ahead of schedule failed as European coastal states Italy and Greece felt their sovereignty endangered by foreign border officers. This theme is already strongly connected to the below-elaborated *protection* theme.

Securitisation and externalisation do strongly have the purpose of protecting Europe: Austrian representatives here use the phrase that "it must not be that entering a boat in North Africa means automatically the ticket to Europe" Deutschlandfunk, 2018). Without securitisation and externalisation, European freedom (and as a looming threat the whole European project) would be at stake. That is why securitisation cannot be without externalisation: Those who want to come would have to be brought back to "safe centres where refugees can be brought to and taken care of" (Deutschlandfunk, 2018). Here especially, some shrill statements are delivered. They could be discounted as extreme position but this would not reflect their dimension: They come from heads of states and

high officials and do reflect strong positions in some European regions or parties there. As the above-examined vision paper by Austria and Denmark underlines tough proposals from the extremes of the political spectrum can eventually be reflected on national policy level and this is especially important to point out in the case auf the EU's rotating presidency Austria. Utterances going in a similar direction come from the Czech prime minister: "Why should there be centers? Center should be outside of Europe. Ellis Island, yes? And the Australian model, very simple. We have to execute this" (Baltimore Sun, 2018) Orbán as well demands: "Don't let them in, and those who are in, send home" (Associated Press, 2018).

Other measures, like the *fight of root causes* (expressive value) and the promotion of *legal channels of migration,* only appear rarely anymore, e.g. in form of the promotion of the (EUTF Plus Media Solutions, 2018b), the raising of awareness for root causes and the need to tackle them (ASC Media, 2018). The demand for resettlement programmes as legal channels (Deutschlandfunk, 2018) which would clearly not be in the interest of all involved sides is proposed as well.

Here again, the picture of Europe as *supportive power* (experiential value) appears strongly. Attempts of training the Libyan coastguard, like operation Sophia, are pointed out as crucial (Bundeskanzleramt, 2018; Plus Media Solutions, 2018a), and a senior EU-official states: "This is about helping countries to do what they are bound by international law to do" (DPA international, 2018). This theme fits in all three value categories as it reflects a certain perception of the situation that does not see Europe directly related to causes and solutions of massive migratory movements. Instead, the problem itself gets externalised together with the guarantee for Europe to be protected from it.

Of both experiential and expressive character is the theme of *protection*. Within the greater narrative, it seems coherent that the people on flight have to be protected not in Europe but already in Africa. It is presented as a humanitarian solution as this would help to protect refugees from becoming victims of smugglers and traffickers or, in the worst case, drowning. Sebastian Kurz phrases it: "Since tugboats have been picked up by Egypt or the Libyan coastguard and brought back to North Africa, fewer people have started the dangerous crossing of the Mediterranean. So we have achieved our most important goal: the mass drowning in the Mediterranean is over" (Die Welt, 2019).

But again, as already the first case study has shown, protection has two sides. In the 2018- debate, the priority then does not lie on the protection of refugees; it lies on the protection of Europe. In Merkel's government declaration, protection of the people – already with the notion that their route has a criminal dimension – appears as follows:

> "It is a question of how we can put a stop to smuggling and trafficking. The following principle must apply: If we want people from Africa, who in most cases have no right of asylum, to no longer come to Europe sacrificing or endangering their own lives, paying a lot of money, supporting criminal structures, then we must also discuss with the African states how we can organise repatriations and perhaps also prevent people from first going through the desert and then risking their lives" (Bundeskanzleramt, 2018).

However, already before this paragraph, she states why action – the disembarkation platforms – is needed:

> "There is therefore a need for action. It is always about order, control, effectively,

sustainably. It is about our internal security, and it is about the internal security of the entire European Union. This requires both national and European measures" (Bundeskanzleramt, 2018).

Protection for the sake of protection appears similarly in a piece by Guy Verhofstadt (The Daily Star, 2018) and especially in a statement by French president Macron (States News Service, 2018).

At the Council meeting in June, when the idea of the two kinds of centres was presented, relief about the new common strategy for the protection of people and especially Europe and its values was great. Talking about the package of both inner-European centres (an idea that disappeared as quickly as it arose) and the disembarkation platforms, Macron said: "We are protecting better. We are cooperating more. And we are reaffirming our principles. All hastily made solutions, be they solely national ones or a betrayal of our values that consists in pushing people off to third countries, were clearly set aside" (Baltimore Sun, 2018). And Hungarian Orbán, first demanding that "[t]he invasion should be stopped and to stop the invasion means to have strong border" (The Financial Post, 2018), celebrated the outcome as a "great victory" for Visegrad: "Thus Hungary will not become an immigrant country; Hungary will remain a Hungarian country" (Baltimore Sun, 2018).

The migration debate on the highest political level in Europe in the year 2018 is characterised by a strong interconnection of various themes that bring together the protection of external border to protect Europe and its values which then would allow European states to protect people – and therefore would hold up European values. This comes along with a conscious distancing of the own role from the causes of mass migration. It strongly appears that not even in written and spoken word the fight of root causes and the common overcoming of the problems is in focus but the protection – and hence securitisation – of European borders. The whole narrative is summarised exemplarily by Austria's EU minister Blümel:

> "In Europe, it is important to end the dying in the Mediterranean. What we see now is that people are looking for illegal routes from Africa to Europe, paying for the smugglers, trying to cross the Mediterranean to Europe at the risk of their lives and, unfortunately, their lives, and many of them have to die on the way there. The reason for this is that there is currently a prospect that if you board a boat in North Africa, that could be the de facto ticket to Europe. In other words, if we also reduce the incentives, fewer people will come if this possibility does not exist in its present form. I believe that this is highly humanitarian access" (Deutschlandfunk, 2018).

4.3.1.3. Fragmentation of European Voices and the Time Dimension

Even though the above-outlined narrative is quite strong (especially from Austrian side), it is noticeable that it's not unchallenged within the European block. Opposition comes especially from the Commission and the EP. European Commissioner Avramopoulos, responsible for inner affairs and migration, positioned himself as a strong critic of the proposed platforms from the beginning on, comparing them to Guantanamo (Politico, 2018). Mogherini points out a potential imbalance in discussion with African states: "But again, if we take the approach of 'we do not take them, you take them', that does not fly.

If we take a cooperative approach, we have a common problem, we can manage it only together with the UN, I think this can this can be developed further" (Plus Media Solutions, 2018a). Avramopoulos goes further and wants to avoid the impression Europe would carry on colonial attitudes: "And believe me what prevails today within the European Union has nothing to do with the old colonial attitudes. No, we are not here to dictate. We keep working with these countries. I have been traveling from Tunisia, to Mali, to Niger, in order to find a solution, but so far, as I told before, no country in the region has shown willingness to host this kind of camps. On the other hand, we have to support these countries in terms of development" (ASC Media, 2018). As well as Avramopoulos, Commission's president Juncker points out that "one should not feel today that there is neo-colonialism here" (Spiegel Online, 2018a). However, that both feel the urge to point this out explicitly indicates at least a critical reflection of this danger.

It can be concluded, that the European voices are fragmented to some extent, but general agreement exists to further the protection of external borders. Generally, as various quotes used above show the Visegrad-states push for much stricter policies than the rest of the leaders. However, as the proposal is agreed on by the heads-of-states, the concept of disembarkation platforms was at least in the situation in June seen as a doable solution that could unite the European leaders behind one proposal.

4.3.2. Interim Conclusion

Most themes appearing in spoken utterances support those in the documents: The fight of criminal networks, the self-distancing from a greater responsibility, the highlighting of a European solution and the protection (of both refugees and Europe from the refugees) appear in both chapters vital. The focus is in both chapters on securitising the border and externalising the protection, but the importance of partnership is highlighted as well. Also, the Council's presidency highlights the paradigm shift the new focus on externalisation would have brought. Even though internal critique became more visible, a coherent narrative can be identified. This narrative already contains several elements that must be considered problematic in terms of a fair and equal partnership by holding subtle forms of political dominance (compare chapter 2.2). The conclusion (which is, on the analytical level, part of the explanatory stage) will elaborate on this.

The following chapter will outline the reactions from Africa and with this explain the specific development the proposal underwent in the examined period. Being presented in late June as a great solution to the crisis, it was never developed in detail but to be analysed further. The in-depth proposal that should have emerged from that, however, was never written. Over the analysed period, a decline in utterances is significant. Peaks are around the June-summit and the Council presidency's working meeting in Austria in mid-September. After that, however, the proposal rarely appears anymore and Sebastian Kurz is criticising the term and emphasises again what he declares to be the core principle of the idea: "In the case of disembarkation centres, I insist on the distinction between the basic idea and the terminology. Something with the name 'disembarkation platform' will not happen, because there are significant objections to it in North Africa. Generally, however, t h e i d e a that the rescue from the Mediterranean must not mean the automatic ticket to Central Europe, still exists" (translation by J.B., Die Welt, 2019).

4.3.3. The Other Side of the Mediterranean: African Reactions to the Proposal

Compared to the above case-study about the migration summit on Malta, the situation looks slightly different in this case. For the summit, African states could develop and present their common position in advance and, therefore, build their own narrative about the migration situation. In this second case now, a European proposal was presented without prior negotiations with African states and not during a summit but as part of EU internal negotiations. Hence, a coherent narrative from the African side cannot be expected here. The most recent document that summarises the African (in the sense of the African Union) position on migration is the draft common position from 2017 (African Union, 2017). The African position is still key in order to contextualise the European narrative and understand how European action and themes are understood in North African countries. Only with this context, the relations between the various states and institutions around the Mediterranean can be understood.

Within the reactions from African leaders, the rejection of both the proposal and the general interaction of the European leaders with Africa stand out. Strong reactions are delivered by most countries concerned, with the friendliest calling disembarkation platforms "not a solution" (The Arab Weekly, 2018a). Even though this paper is focused on African reactions one from the Balkans, delivered by Albania's prime minister Edi Rama may be added: "These camps would mean dumping desperate people somewhere like toxic waste that nobody wants" (The Irish Times, 2018).

Regarding the way in which European leaders do (or do not) approach North Africa the Tunisian Ambassador to the EU, Tahar Cherif, complained that "[t]he proposal was put to the head of our government a few months ago during a visit to Germany, it was also asked by Italy, and the answer is clear: no! […] We have neither the capacity nor the means to organise these detention centres. We are already suffering a lot from what is happening in Libya, which has been the effect of European action" (The Guardian, 2018). Morocco's foreign minister Bourita was questioning the European attitude, asking: "Are we real partners or just a neighbor you're afraid of?" (Deutsche Welle, 2018). He continued that "Morocco is generally opposed to all kinds of centres. That is part of our migration policy and a national sovereign position ... [it is] too easy to say that this is a Moroccan issue" (Deutsche Welle, 2018).

Insights into the perception of European action are also delivered by Libyan prime minister Fayez Al-Sarraj in an interview with German tabloid BILD (Bild Online, 2018). Here he criticises that Libya is not receiving enough support (despite tangible support and training mission like operation Sophia). Being the leader of the internationally recognised interim government with control only over small parts of the Libyan territory and being challenged by rebels, militias and a renegade army, Sarraj outlines the security situation in his country: "We have created refugee shelters for tens of thousands of people, but there are hundreds of thousands of illegal migrants in our country. This has heavily impaired the security situation. They include terrorists, criminals, and human traffickers who do not care about human rights. It's horrible. In order to improve the situation, we must fight these structures. But we also need more international help for this. It begins with our country's borders. It's imperative that they be better controlled" (Bild Online, 2018). This being said by the country's prime minister further problematises the European approach to erect disembarkation platforms in Libya where human rights

and the Geneva Convention are respected. About the platforms, Sarraj says: "No, we won't have them here. We are strictly against Europe officially placing illegal migrants who are no longer wanted in the EU in our country. We also won't agree on any deals with EU money about taking in more illegal migrants. The EU should rather talk to the countries that people are coming from and should put pressure on these countries instead. There won't be any deals with us. I am very surprised that while nobody in Europe wants to take in more migrants anymore they are asking us to take in further hundreds of thousands" (Bild Online, 2018).

Support for the African countries comes from Filippo Grandi, the United Nations' high commissioner for refugees: "Africa has enough problems to deal with, and there's a high-risk asylum seekers could be stuck in transit countries." The EU would have "all the capacities to manage this flow in a fair way, without putting the burden on [a] poorer region that already hosts many refugees" (Al Jazeera (2018).

Again, the (situational) context, bringing the analysis to the second stage of interpretation, shows clearly a different picture to the one the European leaders tried to create. The proposal was never developed far enough to cause a direct confrontation between European heads of states and EU institutions and the African ones, respectively the African Union. But the reactions analysed underline that the partnership theme is at least questionable and also indicates that externalisation of European borders is part of the political reality in North Africa.

4.3.4. Conclusion: The European Narrative and the European-African Power Relations

The final stage of analysis, the explanation, will bring together the prior stages and findings. This case study has, similar to the one before, shown, that (1) the European narrative and action diverge significantly and that (2) African leaders are rejecting the proposed platforms and do not agree on the narrative either. In the experiential and relational value dimensions, principles of partnership and cooperation were held up high in theory. Yet, already the EU documents indicated that Europe first developed its concept before it was discussed with third-states. This created the impression of Europe putting the proposal "on their head" as one of the above quoted African officials stated. It further showed that the focus of tackling the migration situation was explicitly put on border protection, securitisation and externalisation. Tackling of root causes did not play an important role anymore. Hence, the expressive value dimension follows another – much more Eurocentric – path then the themes being part of the experiential and relational value dimension would give reason to expect. This approach, further, is an entirely alternative path to solution proposals, e.g. by the African Union, with all three values – experiential, relational and expressive – being different if not contradictory to the non-European perspective(s). Yet, competing solutions were rarely considered. The identified narrative is centred on protecting Europe and creating a new, much more distanced, position for Europe within the "refugee crisis". At the same time, it remained a dominating theme on European level that was perceived as a threat to the whole European project. What appears to be a contradiction on the first sight may be rooted in internal political processes and needs. It was shown that the "emergency summit" in June was the result of internal confrontations within the German government and on the European level between rather liberal governments and the growing number of right-wing

governments. This factor clearly requires further in-depth study. This thesis can only point out the potential influence of European inner affairs on the creation of the proposal of disembarkation platforms. Hints are utterances by e.g. Commissioner Avramopoulos, calling it a political crisis (States News Service, 2018), or an expert who described the situation in June as "engineered panic […] taking the conversation in a very dangerous direction" (Al Jazeera, 2018). Whether the presented "solution" in the form of camps both on and outside of European grounds was the outcome of inner-European struggles the form it was presented in – and the themes that were used for that – indicate a significant degree of ignorance towards non-European demands and perspectives. Further, the "more-for-more- principle" is still strongly represented in European development cooperation (Koch, Florian, 2017). This aspect does – even though rarely – appear in utterances, e.g. with Sebastian Kurz stating that being among the first countries to cooperate can be rewarding (The Arab Weekly (2018b).

African reactions are united in their rejection of the demand for platforms. Perspectives on helpful measures here vary significantly but no state wants to be "bought" by the European block. Many of the harsh reactions reflected the generally as unbalanced experienced power relation. What remains, in the end, is "verbal neocolonialism": One that puts pressure on third- countries and does not consider their perspectives and experiences. But it's also one that tries strongly to avoid the impression of neocolonialism and – in the studied case – it is one that is not taking land and does not succeed in creating agreements which manifest imbalance as they are based solely on European wishes and perceptions. But it is neocolonial in the sense of the use of political and economic power as a mean of domination to push the "burden" of refugees and migrants to third countries, creating the quite comfortable position for European leaders pick the migrants they want. This expression may vary over the block but is brought together in the agreement to the Council conclusion from June and the following EU documents. This, then, results in the exertion of power in the sense of interpretational sovereignty and, where possible, the establishment of actual means of control, e.g. by forcing states into specific forms of border and people control and cooperation to block migration routes. Such concepts are even publicly considered by influential political consultants like the German government's advisor for Africa, Günter Nooke, who – building on a theoretical idea by Nobel Prize winner Paul Romer – suggested "charter cities", where foreign countries could develop cities following their structures on territory developing countries gave up voluntarily. This would help to boost development by creating Hong Kong's in developing countries (BBC News, 2018; B.Z., 2018).

Re-connecting to the theoretical chapter outlined above, in particular the symbiosis of Young's work with Nkrumah's, the here exerted form of neocolonialism is one that aims at directing policies in a specific field from outside and it is especially one that tries to export – to externalise – the social struggles of Europe to North Africa: As the case study (and the prior one as well) have shown, refugees and migrants are perceived as threatening and are often characterised as invaders in the European welfare systems. Here, the analysis indicates that Nkrumah's work from 1965 is still of great relevance and precision.[8]

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[8] Cf. The section on neocolonialism above on the pages 12 to 15

4.4. Discussion – Findings from the Cases of Valletta and Disembarkation Platforms

Comparing the two case studies gives insights in the dynamics of European migration policy and the governance of the "refugee crisis" as well. On the level of the experiential value dimension a development is visible: In chapter 2.1 it was pointed out that the long-term development within European migration policy goes towards the externalisation of means of protection and security as well as the increasing self-perception of European actors of being a supportive partner for the North African states who actually have to deal with the high numbers of people on flight. This perception is grounded in the assumption that Europe is no factor (and hence has no greater responsibility) in the creation of causes of flight. In other words, European migration and asylum policy is characterised by a self-alienation from this matter. This theme reoccurs in 2018 as the subliminal basis for the proposal of disembarkation platforms: self-exculpation reoccurs in the narrative and specifically in the theme of *support*, which is central within the European narrative. The case of Valletta, however, shows an interesting variation to this theme. It can be assumed that the impression in 2015 with the highest numbers of refugees coming to Europe ever and a terrible amount of people losing their lives on this dangerous way was too immediate to keep up the illusion that migration and people on flight would not be in direct relation to European external action, self- representation and standards. Within the narrative on the highest political level, the protection of refugees within Europe becomes a key theme for the following years and the fight of root causes experiences new popularity. This, however, is never strong and lasting enough to readjust the policy and its communication from the focus on externalisation towards stronger cooperation to tackle root causes. Addressing root causes and the creation of wider legal channels for migration and flight to Europe are not considered consequently and are not of importance anymore in the second case. Especially the second factor would threaten to undermine the whole narrative by implying a greater responsibility – and impact on the situation – of Europe. This would as well problematise certain situations in North African states; but most European leaders appear to be willing to take this step. Further, it is arguably mostly due to external pressure (from African states) and not an internal change of perception that in 2015 the European role as a supportive actor plays less of a role and the non-European positions are negotiating more self-confident than in prior times.

Within the same value dimension it is visible that the theme of *crisis perception* changes slightly. Being common sense by European leaders in 2015 this is not the case anymore three years later. Voices, criticising the political nature and artificial character of what is called crisis in 2018 are louder and can be found on the highest political level. It can be argued that the "refugee crisis" shifted the self-reflection on European asylum policy in the case of the Valletta Summit and led towards a slightly different approach than before or after. However, as case study two showed, the overall direction of European migration and asylum policy did not generally change.

This further supports the argument that 2015 the situation was indeed perceived as a crisis and according reaction has to be found. Being the nature of a crisis, it affected Europe so directly that it stirred up its narrative and attempts to distance itself from the matter of migration and flight. In 2018 then, the common-sense perception of the situation as crisis was not given anymore, but certain forces (from various political camps) still used it for political gains. While this hypothesis cannot be examined in detail here and

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requires further investigation it is supported by an argument brought up by Hansen: "Politicians should not [...] give the impression that immigration can be turned on and off like a tap, or that migrants will merely resolve labour shortages or do jobs that Europeans do not want to do before going quietly on their way. [...] The history of immigration to the UK makes it clear that public suspicion can quickly be transformed into loud, ugly opposition if a politician or party lends its support. This is true everywhere in Europe" (Hansen, 2003: 31-2).

Not surprisingly, the relational value dimension does not show greater changes. The role of non-European states within the European narrative is continuously the same: the one of equal partners. Yet, this is not shared by the alleged partners but rather criticised as cooperation on unequal terms. Despite the emphasis of *partnership*, third states appear to be primarily of strategic relevance for the attempts to stretch out the net of European border regimes, creating indeed – as discussed in part I of this thesis – a maze that blocks routes and hence people and with this contributes to the further fortification of the European Union's external borders.

Within the expressive dimension, emphasis is put on regional solutions in North Africa, sometimes connected to the generally present conditionality. With this, it discounts the formulated equality in the relational dimension of the narrative. It, however, is in consequence of the above-outlined general perception that solutions and shelter have to be found regionally with Europe in a supportive role. While it creates coherence with the experiential dimension, the contraction to the relational dimension leaves the impression of rather a Eurocentric acting. It again must be pointed out that European leaders spoke in much greater unity at the Valletta Summit than in 2018. The 2018 proposal, then, follows more the path European migration and asylum policy follows since the early 2000s.

Especially in the second case, the role of inner-affairs on national as well as European levels should not be underestimated and can be considered a driving force. This aspect, which is closely related to the on-going changes in the European political constellations, needs further investigation.

The situational context, which is of particular relevance in this thesis, consists mostly of the overwhelmingly adverse reactions from African leaders towards the European proposals. Whether it is the way of dealing with the alleged partners or the content of the proposals itself, the African position only shares very basic assumptions with the European one. In the case of Valetta the African states had the chance to formulate their own narrative while in the second case the surprise resurrection of the asylum platforms did only provoke very negative reactions that especially show the lack of negotiations in advance – space for an actual discussion of the proposal and the presentation of the African narrative was at no point given here. The African reactions provide evidence that at least parts of the European external migration policy is not just un-consensual but contains elements that are tried to be imposed on non-European states against their will. The fact that non-European actors are silent in the European discourse, even though they may be strongly affected by the matter, appears to be common in the European discourse according to Bhambra: "As Trouillot argues, the silencing of colonial encounters is one aspect of a wider narrative of global domination; a narrative that, he suggests, will persist as long as the history of the West — or, for our purposes, Europe — 'is not retold in ways that bring forward the perspective of the world' (1995: 107). Understanding

Europe in times of the postcolonial, then, requires us to bring forward the perspective of the world — that is, to think of Europe from a global perspective — as well as bring forward other (non-European) perspectives on the world" (Bhambra, 2009: 2). In this sense, a truly *post-* colonial Europe that is not facing allegations of neocolonialism can only be reached if those would be given a voice in the European discourse who are actually affected by its outcomes.

The case studies have shown that the arrival of migrants and refugees is first and foremost perceived as a threat. Yet, European values and the self-perception as a project of peace and humanitarianism in the aftermath of the atrocities of two world wars and the Holocaust create the un-discussable obligation to provide protection. This dualism is, as shown in 2.1, not unnatural for Europe, especially in times of extraordinarily high numbers of refugees arriving. The form of protection, however, is rooted in a problematic mind-set: "The questions posed by Satvinder S. Juss provide evidence of how the Dublin system on refugees is still anchored in the mindset of colonial Europe in which every area of Europe is the same – a safe territory for the postcolonial subject – thus ignoring how the asylum-seeker and migrants alike are conceptualized (and treated) as emerging threats to this mindset" (Kinnvall, 2016: 161).

Of central relevance in the construction of the European narrative is the theme of *protection*, holding together the rest of the themes. Protection has the double function of showing the upholding of European values by protecting the people but also protecting Europe against the "streams", "flows", "waves" or "avalanches" of them coming in: The creation of fortress Europe. Protection gives the freedom to adjust policies in different directions. In this sense, it puts into practice the theoretical argument outlined in the paragraph above. The named readjustment in different directions can further be observed in between the two case studies: While both functions appear in both cases, in the first one, it appears to be of significantly greater importance to fight root causes while in the second one the protection of Europe is clearly in the foreground. *Protection* of Europe (together with *support*) has also the function of a self-exculpation: The waves and floods of people, the threat, are surging against the fortresses walls without Europe being involved in causing them. In other words, the here examined use of verbal images heavily supports the picture of Europe that has only a passive role and no causative role in the global migration developments. The theme of protection represents exceptionally well this particular use of language. The ambiguity of protection is also reflected in the slogan of the Austrian Council presidency, which was here also used as the title for part II of this thesis: "A Europe that protects" Austrian Council Presidency, 2018).

It was argued above that European states aim at externalising their migration and asylum policies, creating a buffer zone in North Africa, consisting of states that have, with the support of the EU, to host an protect refugees from countries in their region while often themselves being a source of emigration and persecution of demographic groups. It comes as no surprise that this policy is often criticised by NGO's and human rights organisations as not living up to the standards of international protection and the self-representation of Europe as a normative power that protects human rights. The creation of such a buffer zones, then, has – besides the effects on the people on flight who are kept in a limbo between the place they had to leave and the one they desire to find a better life at – the, in this chapter discussed, remarkable double effect on Europe's external borders: The reinforcement of the blurry character of Europe's external borders via the influence of European legislation and security demands and the protection of the

actual European border. In this maze of border structures, the actual border of Europe has especially the function of a demarcation to the other, the non-European. Even though the measures that were taken during the "refugee crisis" are not part of the ENP, the soft-border-approach is still the same. The two case studies appear to support the following argument by Bhambra:

> "The idea of a 'natural' border to the south, while typically demarcated by the waters of the Mediterranean is, nonetheless, conveniently forgetful of the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla which stretch the frontiers of the EU into Africa. This is clearly indicated, as Hansen suggests, by the 'two parallel fences hedged off by barbed wire entanglements and equipped with electronic sensors and thermal cameras', floodlit at night to provide literal 'enlightenment' about where the 'frontiers of the EU lie in Africa' (2004: 55). Europe's 'messy' boundaries become 'messier' still when we begin to consider the geographical territories — the French Overseas Departments of Reunion, Guyana, Martinique, and Guadeloupe, for example — in which 'payments are made in euros and the inhabitants are 'citizens of the EU' (Hansen 2004: 55) and yet do not constitute any part of typical representations of the European Union. Their absence from the official discourses of the EU and from its territorial representations — that is, its maps — is reinforced by the failure of academics adequately to theorize the implications of EU borders that stretch into Africa, the Indian Ocean, the Pacific, South America, and the Caribbean. As Hansen has remarked, the invisibility of these borders further points to the European Union's 'disinclination to deal with the history and legacy of colonialism' (2004: 57), a history and legacy of which these borders are existing remnants" (Bhambra, 2009: 4).

Above, the definition of neocolonialism provided by Nkrumah and used by Young had been introduced, stating "that 'the essence of neocolonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus political policy is directed from outside'" (Young, 2016: 46).It further has been argued, by referring to further definitions which draw less on the economic argument that this definition is also of use for analysis of political exercise of power. Following this argument, the struggle between the officially independent, yet financially and technically on Europe depending, North African states and the European states, trying to implement policies and technologies in the interest of their security needs becomes apparent in the here analysed case studies. This, along with the denial of a reflection of the past and measures that often go against the will of the states where they should (but, at least in these cases, are often not) be implemented create the impression that the dimension of European external action concerned with migration and asylum is characterised by a form of neocolonialism – despite the contrary reaffirmations by Juncker and others. It, however, cannot be seen as a strong or very obvious form of neocolonialism. Nkrumah described neocolonialism as the last – and weakest – stage of imperialism. In the here analysed cases, the European action cannot, while being in parts neocolonial and definitely based on unequal terms, be described as imperialistic. However, Nkrumah's quote still describes well the fading strength of European actors in the examined relations. It is *implicit* or *indirect neocolonialism* because of the European attempts to persist the prerogative of interpretation and the attempts to impose policies that serve European interests and do not consider the African perception, e.g. by means as conditionally. But it also doesn't reach an especially strong manifestation as

quite some demands had been fended: the European position, it appears, is in this field and this situation not strong enough to fully push through the European will(s). Especially in the second case, the inner divide in Europe is so strong that the proclaimed proposal vanishes soon again, not even within Europe a basis exists on which it can be actually put into practice. Especially in the second case the focus in the debate – while talking about external measures – is so strongly on inner European developments that an already above-made point has to be stressed again: it remains unclear how purposely the dominance in form of neocolonialism actually is. But it has as well to be emphasised that this is no justification for any form of neocolonialism in external affairs.

This thesis has touched upon many aspects and factors that require further examination. This concerns a more long-term view on the development of externalisation and the migration and asylum narrative the EU and its members are following since the early 21st century. It further involves the development of the African states' position. The two cases studied in this thesis suggest an increasingly strong and self-confident position. This, however, requires much more analytical work. It can also be of great relevance to study the influence of geostrategic alternatives like the growing interest of China in Africa on African-European relations.

This thesis cannot provide more than qualitative case study work that eventually comes to the conclusion that the European external action and its narratives is based on unequal terms and in parts neocolonial and hence would potentially need reconsideration: After all, imposing policies that are only in the interest of one of the involved parties is not sustainable concerning the policies itself as well as the relations between the partners. Whether the imbalance on which the relations in migration and asylum policies between Europe and Africa draw is consciously accepted or an ancillary effect of self-centred politics cannot be examined in this work but a fair and sustainable cooperation, based on actual partnership, would need another foundation to build on than one that is often perceived as dominant foreign control and ignorant towards other perceptions. Especially from the side of the genuinely European institutions – the parliament and the Commission – come voices that support such a reframing. Taking their engagement for a better-balanced cooperation into account, this thesis can conclude with the hope for such a readjustment.

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