ZEi

Carla Manzanas

Movement, Security and Media

Discussion Paper

C233
2016

Carla Manzanas is a journalist specialized in migration and the Middle East. In 2015 she completed the Master of European Studies at ZEI. Currently she is engaged in projects that study the portrayal of migrants and asylum seekers by media in Europe and North America.

Carla Manzanas

Movement, Security and Media

Migration and the movement of people have characterized humankind for centuries, and will continue to be so as long as there is life in our planet. The current shape and structure of our societies would not be possible without the desire and the need to go further to explore what is beyond the horizon. The decision of leaving behind the motherland can be motivated by several reasons which have been changing and evolving through history. From tribes and groups to individual journeys, migration is essentially the movement towards a better life, "an exercise in hope".[1]

From colonialism through slavery to economic migration, the movement of people around the globe constitutes a prominent part in the creation of current nations, states and societies. How this phenomenon is perceived and understood among communities varies throughout history, having mainly an economic emphasis some decades ago and becoming today a security issue.

The western part of Europe started to experience a new kind of influx and population movement after the end of World War II. The rise of capitalism introduced a new migration paradigm, essentially urged by labor and economic migrants.[2] The idea that with the introduction of capitalism freedom would reign and allow all mankind to freely relocate in a new part of the world is still today an abstract idea applying only to certain collectives.

---

1   Bonnici, Ugo Mifsud , Migration in the Mediterranean: Introductory Observations, in: Grech, O./Wohlfeld, M. (eds.), *Migration in the Mediterranean: Human Rights, Security and Development Perspectives*, Malta: MEDAC, 2014: 1-14.
2   Castles, Stephen/Miller, Mark J., *The Age of Migration*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

According to the UNHCR annual report on Global Trends, in 2014 the numbers of forced displacement reached almost 60 million, an amount that roughly equals the population of Italy or the United Kingdom.[3] As the report calls them, the "nation of the displaced" would make the 24th largest country in the world.

The global numbers published by the United Nations are often perceived as abstract and far away from the European reality, not even thinking that behind those numbers there are 60 million stories, 60 million individuals coerced to abandon everything. Despite the distance that some Europeans feel, several refugees and asylum seekers cross the Mediterranean throughout their journey. In October 2015, 218,000[4] people crossed the Mare Nostrum, an amount of people that almost equals number of refugees arriving in southern Europe during the whole of 2014 (220,000 refugees and migrants).[5] The year 2015 amounts by the end of November almost 900,000 arrivals by sea.[6] Most of them arrive to Greek shores and islands, continuing their journey through Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia. More than 3,500 migrants and refugees have lost their lives at sea or are missing during the year 2015.[7]

The European Union and more concretely those Member States coasting the Mediterranean are directly affected by the abovementioned events, urging for a response up to the task and to the dramatic situation. While it is true that the Treaty of Lisbon foresees some provisions and Articles dedicated to the common policy on border checks, asylum and immigration[8], little effort has been done at the supranational level, especially regarding the human dimension of the issue. Countries like Italy, Greece and Malta have been confronted with economic and logistic

---

3   UNHCR, *World at war: Global Trends – Forced displacement 2014. Online at:* http://unhcr.org/556725e69.html. Last date of access: 27.07.15.

4   UNHCR, *Refugees/Migrants Emergency Response – Mediterranean*. Online at: http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php. Last date of access: 28.11.15.

5   Ibid (3).

6   Ibid (4).

7   Ibid (4).

8   See Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Chapter 2: Policies on Border Checks, Asylum and Immigration.

challenges when tackling the arrival of boats and migrants to their coasts, trying with limited success to persuade the upper half of the Union to share the responsibility of the situation.[9]

Since the Arab Spring in 2011, the number of people crossing the Mediterranean has increased. The pictures of people in tiny, decayed, overfilled boats have travelled around the world, becoming a part of our daily news review. As pointed out earlier, the perception of migration has a changing nature, strongly influenced by political approaches and media. Power elites and media engage in a feedback where the former would not have such impact among the population without the reinforcing of newspapers, television and radio.[10] In addition, mass media do not constitute a harmless, passive way of reproducing political messages; instead, they play an active and powerful role in the construction of meaning, ideas and judgements in the society.[11]

Concerning migration and more concretely the flows and events taking place in the Mediterranean, media have played a crucial role in the portrayal of people arriving to the shores of southern Europe. The lack of context and perspective in media reporting usually implies a generalization of "the migrant", classified as a threat and danger that directly leads to a misleading construction of the reasons and consequences of migration in the Mediterranean.[12] The political discourse regarding migration in general and in the Mediterranean in particular has been focusing on defensive connotations that have put the issue on the top of the security agenda. The securitization framework developed by the *Copenhagen School of International Relations* has widened the range of issues and threats that can be included in the security agenda, migration among them.[13] During the last decade, governments have been obsessed with the idea of creating a

---

9   Bonnici, op. cit., 1-14.

10   Van Dijk, Teun, *Elite discourse and racism*, USA: SAGE Publications, 1993: 241.

11   Ibid (7).

12   Saracino, Daniel, *Media-Conflict-Migration – The conflict potential of the media coverage regarding migration from the countries of the Arab Spring to Europe*, Bonn: IFA- Research Programme, 2013.

13   Buzan, Barry/Waever, Ole, et al., *Identity, Migration and the New Security Agenda in Europe*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1993.

fortress of their sovereign states. Reducing legal ways to enter the countries and building physical barriers to "discourage" migrants to seek for a better future are currently seen as a normal and justified practice in Europe.[14] The word migration has been linked to negative connotations by the way in which media and public authorities have tackled the issue. Why is that? How do political and media discourses have an effect on the creation of meaning and attitude towards newcomers?

An analysis of the securitization theory by the Copenhagen School of International Relations, an overview of the measures taken by the European Union regarding the current migration situation in the Mediterranean and an examination of the way newspapers have reported the issue according to discourse and persuasion techniques developed by Teun A. van Dijk, will provide the necessary information to be able to answer some of the abovementioned questions.

1. Migration: an overview

The international migration report 2013 of the United Nations estimates around 232 million of migrants worldwide, representing the 3.2 % of the total world population.[15] This number has increased over the last decades, accounting around 175 million in 2000 and 154 million in 1990. The top five countries in 2013 with the largest amount of international migrants are the United States of America (46 million), the Russian Federation (11 million), Germany (10 million), Saudi Arabia (9 million) and the United Arab Emirates (8 million).[16] Globalization has made it easier for people to travel and settle down in new countries. The internationalization of

---

14 Thompson, Caryl, Frontiers and Threats: Should Transnational Migration Be Considered a Security Issue? *Global Policy Journal,* 2013.
Online at: http://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/blog/20/11/2013/frontiers-and-threats-should-transnational-migration-be-considered-security-issue. Last date of access: 10.12.2015.

15 United Nations, *International Migration Report, 12/2013*, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2013. Online at: http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/migration/migrationreport2013/Full_Document_final.pdf. Last date of access: 10.12.2015.

16 Ibid (12).

companies and businesses allows for greater mobility at lower prices. This fact has also diversified the reasons and types of migration in our planet: from students through economic migrants till asylum seekers and refugees fleeing from their countries due to war and violent conflict.

Between the years 2000 and 2010, the international migrant stock raised twice as fast than during the previous 10 years. However, the time period from 2010 to 2013 has experienced a slowdown in the increase of migrant stock.[17] Women account for almost 50% of all international migrants. Europe has the highest rate of migrant women, representing 51.9%, and Asia the smallest one with 41.6%[18].

In the year 2013, the total number of refugees in the world was calculated at 15.7 million, representing 7% of all international migrants[19]. This figure can be surprising if compared with the alarmist discourses and messages politicians and media have been sending in Europe for the past years. The terms "invasion" or "migrant flood" give the impression that the entire African continent is moving to Europe. However, the official figures show that South-South migration, i.e. migrants born in the global South residing in the global South, exceeds South-North migration, i.e. migrants born in the global South residing in the global North.[20]

2. Migration in the Mediterranean

The sea has always been a place of exchange. Trade, culture and war have been present in the waters of the *Mare Nostrum*. Conflict and progress have featured this part of the world from the Egyptians, Phoenicians and Greeks all the way to the Roman Empire and its private lake until the Arab eruption and the endless struggle for territory between Christians and Muslims. There has been as much conflict as trade and business, as much

---

17 See OECD, *World Migration in Figures*, October 2013.
    Online at: http://www.oecd.org/els/mig/World-Migration-in-Figures.pdf.
    Last date of access: 10.08.2015.
18 Ibid (14).
19 Ibid (14).
20 Ibid (14).

invasion as agreement and influence. With the opening of the Suez Canal, the sea gained importance and linked the Western and Eastern civilizations. Up until today, the waters of this sea have served as a connection between the South and the North, the East and the West.

Migration routes in the Mediterranean have evolved during the decades and nowadays there are three main routes across the Mediterranean: the western, central and eastern Mediterranean route. The first one serves as a passage from North African countries to the Iberian Peninsula, as well as the route through Melilla and Ceuta. The highest numbers of migrants are from Morocco or Algeria, but in the past years, many Sub-Saharan Africans have also used this way to enter the EU.[21] In 2005, many people tried to climb the fence separating Melilla from Morocco to access Spanish territory. The actions taken by the Spanish government were highly criticized by NGO's and human rights advocates. The years 2011, 2012 and 2013 experienced an increase in the number of people crossing the borders towards Spain.[22] In 2014, due to conflicts in many countries in the African continent, the flow experienced an increase as well as the causes for people to leave their homeland. Irregular border crossing for 2014 in this route amounted 7,840. From January to September 2015, the number goes up to 10,454 people.[23]

The central Mediterranean route has been one of the most transited since the Arab Spring in 2011, accounting 170,760 people crossing the border to the EU using this route in 2014.[24] For that year, it was the most used one. The route refers to the migratory flow from North-Africa to Italy and Malta. Migrants often travel to Libya and embark in boats aiming at a better future. This route is very used due to its closeness to Lampedusa and Malta, mainly attracting people from Tunisia, Nigeria, Somalia and

---

21 See FRONTEX, Western Mediterranean Route. Online at: http://frontex.europa.eu/ trends-and-routes/western-mediterranean-route/. Last date of access: 28.11.2015.
22 Ibid (21).
23 Ibid (21).
24 See FRONTEX, Central Mediterranean Route. Online at: http://frontex.europa.eu/ trends-and-routes/central-mediterranean-route/. Last date of access: 28.11.2015.

Eritrea.[25] From January to September 2015, there have been 140,705 irregular border crossings through this route.[26]

The eastern Mediterranean route is currently the one accounting more movement. Since the beginning of the year 2015 until September 2015, almost 600,000 persons have crossed the border.[27] This route is mainly by land and goes through Turkey to Greece or Cyprus. Due to the current wars and conflicts, Syrian refugees, Afghans and Iraqi nationals are the most numerous group.

A part from the actual crossings, unfortunately, something that becomes more and more common are the deaths at sea when taking these routes towards Europe. Such is the number that the Mediterranean has become the deadliest region for migrants. By November 27th 2015, 3,551 people have drowned or are missing at sea.[28] This number already exceeds the total number of deaths in 2014 – 3,279 people.[29] These numbers are only estimated amounts of people, assuming that all vessels carrying migrants have been detected and found.

3. Migration and the European Union

3.1 The legal framework

The agenda of the European Union on migration and human movement is often confusing and unclear about responsibilities, distribution of tasks and competencies. In order to comprehend the current events in the Mediterranean, an overview of how migration policy works in the European Union is crucial. The Treaty of Lisbon includes some general

---

25 Ibid (24).
26 Ibid (24).
27 See FRONTEX, Central Mediterranean Route. Online at: http://frontex.europa.eu/ trends-and-routes/central-mediterranean-route/. Last date of access: 28.11.2015.
28 International Organization for Migration, Missing Migrants Project. Online at: http://missingmigrants.iom.int/. Last date of access: 29.11.2015.
29 Brian, Tara/Laczko, Frank, Fatal Journeys-Tracking lost lives during migration, International Organization for Migration, 2014. Online at: https://publications.iom. int/system/files/pdf/fataljourneys_countingtheuncounted.pdf. Last date of access: 10.12.2015.

provisions and also some Articles concerning the management of migration, asylum and border checks.

Article 3 (2) TEU talks about internal and external movement of people aiming at creating "an area of freedom, security and justice without internal frontiers, in which the free movement of persons is ensured" for its citizens, as well as the development of "appropriate measures with respect to external border controls, asylum, immigration and the prevention and combating of crime". This text allows us to identify two kind of movement: internal and external. The first one should be free and ensured for the EU citizens. The second one refers to a common development of third country people migration into the Union.

In the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) we find under Title V the Articles dedicated to the "Area of Freedom, Security and Justice". Article 67 TFEU states that the Union "shall constitute an area of freedom, security and justice". As mentioned above, internal borders have to be inexistent and the Member States "shall frame a common policy on asylum, immigration and external border control, based on solidarity between Member States, which is fair towards third-country nationals". Paragraph three includes the necessity of combating crime, racism and xenophobia. Article 79 TFEU refers to illegal migration, aiming at preventing and combating it. In the same Article under paragraph 3, a third country agreement clause can be found in order to enact readmission procedures of migrants to their country of origin. Article 80 TFEU refers to the solidarity between Member States concerning implementation of migration policies, solidarity and responsibility sharing when it comes to border checks, asylum and immigration.

Although the aim and perspective that the EU adopts in this subject sounds fair, solidary and peaceful, many of the tasks still remain in hand of national governments.[30] This is the case for labor migration – legal aspects and volumes of admission of third-country nationals seeking for work.

---

30 Pace, Roderick, Migration in the central Mediterranean, Jean Monnet Occasional Papers, N. 2, Malta: Institute for European Studies, 2013. Online at: https://www.um.edu.mt/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/179058/JMProfPacePaperMigr ation022013webv3.pdf. Last access of access: 10.12.2015.

To sum it up, the real powers of the European Union concerning migration relate to (1) third-country nationals entering and residing in the Union, (2) fighting against irregular migration and (3) readmission agreements with third countries.

3.1.1 Common European Asylum System

The Common European Asylum System (CEAS) is the framework in which the Union has developed some standards and guarantees for the protection of refugees inside the Union. The bulk of rules concerning this matter have been approved through secondary law – directives and regulations. Up to this day, there are five pieces of secondary legislation in force: the revised Asylum Procedures Directive focusing on asylum decisions as well as protection of the applicants; the revised Reception Conditions Directive, which is aimed at ensuring enough humane material and preserve the fundamental rights of the concerned persons; the revised Qualification Directive, dealing with international protection and integration measures; the Dublin Regulation which establishes the responsible State for examining the asylum application; and the revised EURODAC Regulation, with the purpose of preventing, detecting or investigating serious crimes.[31] Regulations are of direct effect and there is no need to transpose them into national law. That means Member States have little leeway to modify the procedures. Directives, on the other hand, need transposition. The EU sets the goals in the directive and the Member States enact laws to achieve those objectives. The way in which those will be reached is up to the national parliaments, leaving more space for maneuver. In order to ensure a minimum of coherence in the laws approved by the countries, in 2005 some steps were taken[32]: The introduction of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM) has the objective of

---

31 See European Commission, Common European Asylum System, Migration and Home Affairs, 2015. Online at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/index_en.htm. Last date of access: 10.12.2015.

32 Manrique Gil, Manuel/Barna, Judit et al., Mediterranean flows into Europe: Migration and the EU's foreign policy, Brussels: DG External Policies, European Union, 2014. Online at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/briefing_note/join/2014/522330/EXPO-JOIN_SP(2014)522330_EN.pdf. Last date of access: 10.12.2015.

creating a political and legal framework to improve the organization of legal immigration, combating illegal immigration and promoting international asylum.[33] The GAMM is an international cooperation tool that includes the European Union – European Commission, European External Action Service, the Member States and EU Delegations, third countries and migrants themselves with a budget of €1 billion for the period 2004-2013. During these years, more than 400 migration-related projects have been proposed to foster the goals of the initiative, but it has been difficult to implement them because of the multiple and diverse stakeholders.[34] One of the obstacles for the accomplishment of the GAMM has been the exaggerated security-oriented approach that the EU has towards external mobility into the Union. This attitude often clashes with the stated and said-to-be core values of the European project.[35]

In 2008, after the Green Paper Consultation of 2007, the European Commission presented the Policy Plan on Asylum.[36] Even if the purpose of the plan is to increase harmonization of asylum legislation among Member States as well as improve "solidarity and sense of responsibility"[37] between EU countries, the practical implementation of these policies tends to be disappointing. One of the current criticisms is the contradiction between the Dublin System and the burden or responsibility sharing, which is still not clear and up to today there are no signs to be willing to reform either one or the other.

3.1.2 The Dublin system

In June 1990, the Dublin Regime was officially established after the Dublin Convention took place. Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece,

---

33 See European Commission, Migration and Home Affairs, Global Approach to Migration and Mobility. Online at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/international-affairs/global-approach-to-migration/index_en.htm.
Last date of access: on 10.12.2015.
34 Ibid (33).
35 Ibid (33).
36 See European Commission, Migration and Home Affairs, Common European Asylum System, Online at: http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/index_en.htm, June 2015. Last date of access: 10.12.2015.
37 Ibid (36).

Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom signed the text that would determine the responsible country for the management of asylum applications and protection under the Geneva Convention and under EU law.[38] It would posteriorly be replaced by the Dublin II Regulation adopted in 2003 and once again by the Dublin III Regulation, which came into force in June 2013.

The purpose of the regulation is to settle the rules for asylum applications in the EU. It states which Member State is responsible for the examination and approval or denial of the asylum seekers. This law establishes that the asylum seeker must apply for the status in the country where they first entered the European Union – the "State of First Arrival rule". The way in which this will be proved and bureaucratized is through the fingerprints of the migrant.

The intention of this regulation is to ensure that one Member State is responsible for the examination of the asylum application and that the migrant will have access to a clear and efficient system.[39] Furthermore, the agreement tries to avoid several applications in different Member States, preventing the so-called "asylum shopping".

Although in principle the aim is to protect the asylum seeker and have a well-defined framework, the Dublin system often works in detriment of the new comer, especially in the events taking place in the Mediterranean.[40] Currently, under the jurisdiction of the Dublin Regulation, countries like Greece or Malta have a disproportionate level of asylum applications to take care of, often without the proper means and structures to ensure and safeguard the living conditions of the applicants. The conditions established by the Dublin Regulation turn into a loss-loss situation for both

---

38 Council regulation (EC), No. 343/2003 of February 2003 establishing the criteria and mechanism for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national.
39 See European Council on Refugees and Exiles, Dublin Regulation – What is the Dublin System? Online at: http://www.ecre.org/topics/areas-of-work/protection-in-europe/10-dublin-regulation.html. Last date of access: 10.12.2015.
40 Ibid (33).

the country and the migrant.[41] In the case of the Mediterranean, the countries with more volume of arrivals are often those with less developed and solid asylum examination systems such as Greece or Italy. For the asylum seeker, the country of entrance can only be considered to be a country of transit towards another state – due to family, language knowledge, political reasons, etc. – but the current regulation does not allow an application in the desired country, since her or his fingerprints will be registered in the country of arrival. What these rules have triggered is a situation in which asylum seekers try to get to other Member States but are sent back to the country of arrival as soon as they are identified. In some cases the desperation of being sent back leads people to burn their fingers in order not to be identified.[42]

The well-functioning and fairness of this regulation has already been contested before the European Court of Human Rights and before the Court of Justice of the European Union. In the first case, the ECHR issued a judgement on January 2011 concerning the violation of human rights when applying the Dublin Regulation.[43] The Court ruled that Belgium breached Articles 3 and 13 of the European Convention of Human Rights by exposing the asylum applicant to risks arising from the deficient asylum procedure in Greece and the living conditions there.[44]

Later the same year, the CJEU mentioned in the ruling of Joined Cases C-411/10 and C-493/10 that Article 4 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union would be violated in the case that one Member State

---

41 Mouzourakis, Minos, 'We need to talk about Dublin' – Responsibility under the Dublin System as a blockage to asylum burden-sharing in the European Union, Working Paper Series No. 105, University of Oxford, Refugee Studies Centre, 2014. Online at: http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/files/publications/working-paper-series/wp105-we-need-to-talk-about-dublin.pdf/. Last date of access: 10.12.2015.

42 Grant, Harriet and Domokos, John, Dublin Regulation leaves asylum seekers with their fingers burnt, in: *The Guardian*, 07.10.2011. Online at: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/07/dublin-regulation-european-asylum-seekers. Last date of access: 10.12.2015.

43 Council of Europe: European Court of Human Rights, M.S.S. v. Belgium and Greece, Application no. 30696/09, 21 January 2011. Online at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/4d39bc7f2.html. Last date of access: 02.08.2015

44 Ibid (43).

would send back an asylum seeker to a country in which his or her life would be "subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment"[45], considering scanty resources or structures in the asylum examination process a degrading and inhuman treatment.

3.2 The aftermath of the Arab spring in the EU migration policy

The upheavals in some Northern African countries at the end of 2010 such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Syria among others triggered the cooperation between Member States to create a common border control and management.

Legal migration towards Europe experienced an increase in 2011, but did not suppose a significant break compared to the previous years. The past five to ten years have shown a rise in the number of people immigrating to Europe from Northern Africa. The number of migrants has increased in 2011 to 90,839, almost 70,000 in 2010 and more than 100,000 in 2009.[46] In addition, migration from Morocco represented the 72% of the increase for the year 2011, a country where riots and demonstrations did not have the revolutionary strength compared to others.[47]

On the other hand, irregular migration crossing the Mediterranean shot up in the spring of 2011, recording 42,807 persons irregularly entering Italy by sea. In 2010 the number represented less than 5,000 people and less than 10,000 in 2009.[48] A more in-depth analysis of the reasons of the increase leads us to identify some explanations: first, the disorganization of police forces during the year 2011 made it easy for smugglers to circumvent coastal controls in Tunisia. Second, due to the revolutions in many north-African countries, many migrants decided to change their routes and take advantage of the confusion and chaos. This suggests a phenomenon of

---

45 See Article 4, Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
46 Fargues, Philippe/Fandrich, Christine, Migration after the Arab Spring, MPC RR, San Domenico di Fiesole: Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute, 09/2012. Online at: http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/ MPC%202012%20EN%2009.pdf. Last date of access: 10.12.2015.
47 Ibid (46).
48 Ibid (46).

rerouting the already existing flows of irregular migration rather than an increase in the number of people.[49]

In December 2013, the European Council calls for the establishment of an EU Maritime Security Strategy, adopted in June 2014 with the prospect to "provide a common framework for relevant authorities at national and European levels to ensure coherent development of their specific policies and a European response to maritime threats and risks"[50]. Independently of what *threat* and *risks* mean, the fact is that the Arab spring provoked a shift in the European policies developed up to now in the Mediterranean. The past decades have been characterized by the absence of solid and serious EU projects aimed at developing the Mediterranean region. Currently, the feeling is that the institutions just turned towards the Mediterranean Sea to develop military and security initiatives.

Among the security actions taken, the "Integrated Border Management" is one of them. The objective is to create more synergies between the responsible actors to tackle irregular migration and it consists of two elements:

- The first one is Frontex, the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union. Founded in 2004, this body is aimed at strengthening the cooperation in the area of migration, asylum and security.[51] It is of military nature and with the mission of "safeguarding internal security" from "organized crime".[52] In 2011, Frontex was reformed as a response to the revolutions in North-Africa. In this context, Italy implemented in 2013 a national Search and Rescue (SAR) operation to have control of the movement in the Mediterranean and avoid human catastrophes such as the Lampedusa tragedy on 3rd October 2013. The *Mare Nostrum* operation – an Italian initiative – amounted to a monthly

---

49   Ibid (46).
50   See European Commission, Maritime Security Strategy – What is it? Maritime Affairs. Online at: http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/maritime-security/index_en.htm. Last date of access: 10.12.2015.
51   See Frontex, Origin. Online at: http://frontex.europa.eu/about-frontex/origin/. Last date of access: 31.07.2015.
52   Ibid (51).

sum of € 9 million, saving around 150.000 migrants and safely taking them to Europe.[53] The Mare Nostrum operation was substituted at the end of 2014 by Triton, a Frontex run project with a monthly budget of € 3.5 million, less than the half of the previous one. More than a SAR initiative, Triton's operations had a military approach, focusing on border security.

Such military-centered response from the EU and some Member States, suggests that the issue is seen as a threat to the integrity of Europe. Frontex is the chosen tool to deal and *solve* the current problematic in the southern shores of the EU, forgetting the human aspect and perspective of what is actually happening on a daily basis in the sea: children, women, men drowning for wanting to seek a better future, a decent life.

- The second component is Eurosur, an information exchange system to improve the management of EU's external borders formally launched in 2008. The cooperation between EU countries and neighboring states should improve the reaction and capability of combating cross-border crime, irregular migration and preventing loss of lives at sea.[54] Eurosur's surveillance tools should increase the awareness of migrant movements in the Mediterranean to avoid more human losses. The justification that increasing the number of control mechanisms the events of 3rd October 2013 could have been avoided, rouses some criticism[55]: Due to the limited legal ways of entering the European Union and the increased surveillance of military bodies in the Mediterranean, migrants take more dangerous routes to avoid being detected, which leads to a higher risk for the person's life, meaning higher possibilities of experiencing events like the Lampedusa one.[56]

---

53 See Marina Militare, Mare Nostrum Operation. Online at: http://www.marina.difesa.it/EN/operations/Pagine/MareNostrum.aspx. Last date of access: 31.07.2015.
54 See Frontex, Eurosur. Online at: http://frontex.europa.eu/intelligence/eurosur/. Last date of access: 31.07.2015.
55 Heller, Charles/Jones, Chris, Eurosur: saving lives or reinforcing deadly borders? in: *Statewatch Journal*, 02/ 2014. Online at: http://database.statewatch.org/ article.asp?aid=33156. Last date of access: 01.08.2015.
56 Ibid (55).

The usage of these kinds of mechanisms and tools turns the migrant into a criminal, often resulting in a violation and breach of human rights. Almost the 30 Articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are violated either by the country of origin of the migrants or by the European/national authorities in the case of the Mediterranean.

In addition to the reforms of Frontex and the implementation of Eurosur, the Integrated Border Management project counted with a special mission in Libya, the EU Border Assistance Mission (EUBAM). The cooperation is aimed at "improving and developing the security of the country's borders".[57] The intention was to increase border control in the countries of origins so the vessels would not be able to easily set sail. Nevertheless, this country of origin initiative has been downsized due to the current situation in Libya's neighboring countries.

Still another militarized cooperation between the EU and some countries of North Africa is the Seahorse Mediterranean network, the continuation of Seahorse Atlántico launched in 2006. The aim is to train and give courses for coastal and border monitoring in countries such as Libya, Algeria, Tunisia or Egypt.

It can repeatedly be noticed that most of the in-place initiatives from 2011 onwards have a military and security tenor, pointing the migrant as the central problem. The analyzed policies seem to have the objective of creating a fortressed Europe and block migrants from escaping their countries, forcing them to an unhuman life or to an unhuman death. Paradoxically, this strategy has not worked so far and after the militarization of one part of the Mediterranean, what smugglers have done is change their routes, shifting their ways to Greece through Turkey and Egypt or using land routes through the Balkans.[58] A more humanitarian and

---

57 See European Union External Action, EUBAM in Libya. Online at: http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eubam-libya/. Last date of access: 01.08.2015.

58 Sutherland, Peter, Europe's Race to the Bottom on Refugees, *Project Syndicate*, London, June 2015. Online at: http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/european-union-mediterranean-refugee-crisis-by-peter-sutherland-2015-06. Last date of access: 02.01.2015.

effective development aid policy would help tackling the root causes of people risking their lives on a daily basis.[59]

The initiatives taken so far feel somehow distant of what the European Union's values are meant to be: security, freedom and justice. But whose security, whose justice and whose freedom? Apparently only for those who were fortunate enough to be born at a later date inside the European Union.

3.3   European Union solidarity

3.3.1   Burden-sharing

The media and politicians have used – or abused – the term burden-sharing when reporting or talking about migration, especially concerning the current situation in Italy, Malta or Greece.

The idea of burden sharing in relation to refugees stems from international law and goes back to the 1950s. The most notable ideas, rules and guidelines concerning refugees are laid down in the 1951 Refugee Convention and the Protocol of 1967, as well as the statues of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).[60] The refugee regime is composed by two aspects: the obligation of countries on refugees that arrive to their territory and the voluntary, not legally binding responsibility towards those refugees that have not reached their territory. The first one has a clear and defined framework that obliges States to take particular care of the ones in need. The second one has a voluntary and solidary aspect, depending mostly on the willingness of regional or neighboring countries to share the responsibility of refugees. The so called *burden sharing* falls in the second category and is left to regional or international cooperation to apply it or not.

---

59 Calleya, Stephen, Time for a Euro-Mediterranean Migration Policy, in: *ZEI Insights*, Bonn: Center for European Integration Studies (ZEI), No. 19, April 2015. Online at: https://www.zei.uni-bonn.de/dateien/zei-insights/calleya_19-1. Last date of access: 10.12.2015.
60 Betts, Alexander, International Cooperation and the Global Refugee Regime: The role of interconnections, Online at: https://www.princeton.edu/.../International%20Coop. Last date of access: 10.12.2015.

Within the meaning of burden-sharing, two kind of support can be differentiated: the financial and the physical burden-sharing. The first one is aimed at providing economic help to those countries experiencing high volumes of asylum seekers and refugees, which in turn are usually less developed and structured.[61] The second one refers to an actual resettlement of people to other countries, which can be for a period of time or permanently.[62]

In the current situation, the usage of burden-sharing in media and by politicians refers to the physical help. In order to better organize and ensure the well-being of the asylum seekers and refugees in countries like Italy or Greece, the EU has proposed a relocation and resettlement of refugees among the 28 Member Countries. This would mean a temporal suspension of the Dublin system, which is the reason many asylum seekers are sent back to the southern European countries, through which they first entered the EU.

United Kingdom and Hungary strongly oppose this initiative, and have opted-out of the relocation scheme, as well as Denmark, which already has a special status with the EU when it comes to Justice and Home Affairs.[63] The last Council of Home Affairs Ministers ended with a lower number of relocations than the 40,000 promised by the head of states.[64] EU solidarity is challenged on every issue and at every level by populist and national political speeches and discourses. It seems impossible to change this kind of political reaction towards sensitive issues like migration or asylum, but it could be possible to change the structure and rules included in the CEAS. The current configuration of the CEAS has caused much criticism concerning the solidarity and responsibility sharing within the EU.

61 Boswell, Christina, Burden Sharing in the New Age of Migration, Washington: Migration Policy Institute, 11/2003. Online at: http://www.migrationpolicy.org /article/burden-sharing-new-age-immigration. Last date of access: 10.12.2015.
62 Ibid (61).
63 Euranet Plus News Agency, EU fails to agree on migrant burden sharing, *Euranetplus-inside.eu*, July 2015. Online at: http://euranetplus-inside.eu/eu-failed-to-agree-on-migrant-burden-sharing/. Last date of access: 10.12.2015.
64 Ibid (58).

According to Lillian Langford the current composition of the CEAS presents three main threats to the EU solidarity:

- First, the State of First Arrival rule overburdens the southern states, often deficient in structures and human resources. The procedures lay down by the Dublin System trigger conflicts between countries, sending asylum seekers back and forth, usually forgetting the human aspect of the issue.[65]

- Second, even if there have been attempts to harmonize and have coherent migration policies in all Member States, this is not the case yet. There is great disparity in the way regimes work, causing mistrust and hostility between States.[66]

Good examples to understand the problematic are the latest sentences of the European Court of Human Rights and the Court of Justice of the European Union, where both courts ruled that if a Member State sends an asylum seeker back to a country where his or her rights could be violated, the sender country is liable for it. Even if the country has a good asylum management system and the rights of the migrant are respected, the fact that the country is legally – according to the Dublin Regulation – sending the person back to a place where the system is not well established, can seem somehow unfair.[67]

- Third, CEAS restricts the potential of Frontex to achieve solidarity and understanding among States. The agency has been highly criticized for violating human rights in the border control practices, partly due to the dependence of the state-level politics and not being able to work in an autonomous way. Frontex could help to harmonize asylum regimes and to be an example of good practices for all the countries. Instead, tensions arise by the way some situations and events have been militarily approached.[68]

---

65 Langford, Lillian M., The other Euro crisis: Rights Violations Under the European Common Asylum System and the Unraveling of EU Solidarity, *Harvard Human Rights Journal,* Vol. 26, Cambridge, 2014: 216-220.
66 Ibid (65).
67 Ibid (65).
68 Ibid (65).

The current structure and functioning of CEAS could be improved, closer to the Union's core values – "human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality and the respect of human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities".[69]

3.3.2 European Asylum Support Office

A further effort done by the European Union concerning solidarity and the creation of a coherent framework in migration and asylum is the establishment of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). Founded in 2010, this center works as a place of expertise, coordination, practical and technical support as well as an input for EU policy-making.[70] At a practical level, EASO has been cooperating with different Member States to approach the asylum applications situation in the Mediterranean. Example of that are Italy and Greece, which requested the help and support of EASO to plan and implement projects, to access EU funds and other financial help, to train personnel active in this field and get Country of Origin Information.[71]

The work of EASO plays an important role in moments where States are overwhelmed, as is the case in Mediterranean countries since 2011. Nevertheless, the agency does not solve the essential problems that asylum and migration policies currently present in the EU. Establishing plans at a local level without reforming the higher structures of this policy will tend to fail to achieve real solidarity and respect to human rights.[72]As Langford argues, the most important reform of the regulatory regime falls on the amendment of the State of First Arrival rule, which will represent the door to a new stage where human rights can be better ensured, solidarity can become a reality and CEAS will get a more independent position vis-à-vis national interests. It is also true that at the end of the day, the European

---

69 See Treaty on the European Union, Art. 2, § 5, Treaty of Lisbon, 2007.
70 See European Asylum Support Office, What is EASO, Online at: https://easo.europa.eu/about-us/what-is-easo/. Last date of access: 03.08.2015.
71 See European Asylum Support Office, EASO and Greece sign agreement to continue EASO support to Greece until May 2016, Press Release, 19.05.2015. Online at: https://easo.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/20150513-Press-release-signing-of-the-SSP-2.pdf. Last date of access: 10.12.2015.
72 Ibid (65).

Union is made of sovereign States with diverse, occasionally differing, interests and priorities. It is up to them to take the steps to an in-depth reform of this policy area. The overlapping of the migration crisis in the Mediterranean and the economic crisis in a substantial part of Europe, with strong focus on Mediterranean countries, does not seem to encourage a reform of the asylum and migration policy.

4. The securitization of migration

The way migration is perceived and approached has changed during the past decades. As mentioned above, this phenomenon is currently seen as a threat to the stability and integrity of the European nation-states. The migrant is portrayed as a danger to the European society at many levels, especially by politicians and media. Thus we could say that migration has been securitized in the past years, with a big emphasis on those arriving to Europe through the Mediterranean Sea.

The way in which a phenomenon becomes a security issue that was formerly not perceived as such, is explained at the "Securitization Theory", developed by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde at the University of Copenhagen. In the mid-90s, these and other scholars – known as the Copenhagen School – developed a theory by which subjects would become a matter of security through *speech-acts*.[73] The *speech-acts* would mainly be held by politicians or authorities able to create public opinion and have an influence in society as well as to take actions against the threat. Arguably is the role that media develop in the securitization process, if they either play a central role in the creation of public opinion or merely function as a megaphone of politics.

According to the theory, there are three main components and three main steps to securitize a topic: the main components are (1) a securitizing actor or agent (usually politician or authority), (2) a referent object (ideal or object that is being threatened and needs to be protected) and (3) an audience (target that needs to be persuaded and accept the securitization

---

73 Buzan, Barry/Wæver, Ole/de Wilde, Jaap, *Security – A new Framework for Analysis*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998.

process of the issue). The three steps to a successful securitization are the presentation of "existential threats", the need of an "emergency action" and the "effects on interunit relations by breaking free of rules".[74]

The security agenda has been broadened and deepened in the last decades, including not only state and military levels, but also sub-state groups, such as "human security" or "societal security".[75] According to the Copenhagen School, there are several sectors of securitization: the military sector has the territorial integrity as the referent object, the political sector focuses on the legitimacy of the government and the societal sector has cultural flows, economic integration and population movements as the referent object.[76] In the case of migration we would refer to the societal level as the threatened object, being at stake the loss of identity and we-ness sense. The Copenhagen School argues that if a society loses its identity, it will no longer be capable of existing at itself, of preserving the feeling of unity among the members. Bill McSweeney argues that the danger of identifying one society with one identity – omitting the changing nature of it as well as the possibility of having a multi-identity community –, is the potential of unconsciously enhancing the development of racist and xenophobe ideas among people.[77]

So, what is security? What happens when an issue is securitized? According to Ole Wæver, security is a *speech-act*. The usage of the word turns the topic into it. "By saying it, something is done (as in betting, giving a promise, naming a ship)".[78] In the utterance of security, the securitizing actor influences a different development of a given area, turning it into an existential threat that justifies the blockage of it by any

---

74 Ibid (73).

75 Williams, Michael C., Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics, *International Studies Quarterly,* 47, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003: 511-531.

76 Ibid (75).

77 McSweeney, Bill, *Security, Identity and Interests – A sociology of International Relations,* Cambridge University Press, 1999.

78 Wæver, Ole, *Securitization and Desecuritization,* in: Lipschutz, Ronnie D. (ed.), On Security, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995: 46-86.

means.[79] The term security is difficult to define and is usually linked to images and feelings rather than to an abstract thought. McSweeny connects the noun with a "solid object" such as a lock, alarm or weapon, used to protect against danger and attack.[80]

The last step to have a successful process of securitization is to have an audience that receives the message and accepts it, agreeing with the securitizing actor about the perils of the issue. To achieve this stage, a relationship to the threat or enemy has to be built. This goes through a process of division between "us" and "them".[81] The creation of two opposing categories or groups is essential to discriminate who are our friends and our enemies. The groups do not have to exist in advance; the speech-act can be the one creating the previously inexistent divisions. In societal security, this division remains crucial to preserve the *identity* and the existence of the community.

In Europe, migration has become a security issue through speeches and has been institutionalized as such through the implementation of measures and laws that forget the human aspect of the current situation in the Mediterranean.

79   Ibid (75).
80   Ibid (77).
81   Ibid (75).

Das **Zentrum für Europäische Integrationsforschung (ZEI)** ist ein interdisziplinäres Forschungs- und Weiterbildungsinstitut der Universität Bonn. *ZEI – DISCUSSION PAPER* richten sich mit ihren von Wissenschaftlern und politischen Akteuren verfassten Beiträgen an Wissenschaft, Politik und Publizistik. Sie geben die persönliche Meinung der Autoren wieder. Die Beiträge fassen häufig Ergebnisse aus laufenden Forschungsprojekten des ZEI zusammen.

The **Center for European Integration Studies (ZEI)** is an interdisciplinary research and further education institute at the University of Bonn. *ZEI – DISCUSSION PAPER* are intended to stimulate discussion among researchers, practitioners and policy makers on current and emerging issues of European integration and Europe´s global role. They express the personal opinion of the authors. The papers often reflect on-going research projects at ZEI.

Die neuesten ZEI Discussion Paper / Most recent ZEI Discussion Paper:

Die vollständige Liste seit 1998 und alle Discussion Paper zum Download finden Sie auf unserer Homepage: http://www.zei.de.

For a complete list since 1998 and all Discussion Paper for download, see the center's homepage: http://www.zei.de.