

MIGRATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN: THE SMUGGLER AS SCAPEGOAT

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ABSTRACT

For decades now, irregular migrants have been crossing the Mediterranean in precarious boats. This research is concerned with the intensification of those movements in recent years and the various discourses articulated to understand them. Looking at the route between Libya and Italy, this research proposes that while the crossings are usually understood as a reason for concern in Europe, because they were instead looked at through the filter of humanitarianism between 2013 and 2015, the migrant could not be placed in the position of threat. Then in order to circumvent the humanitarian barrier and continue framing migration as problem, Europe had to search for new scapegoats. Through the discourses articulated in the journalistic coverage of the events, it is possible to see that one was found in the figure of the smuggler.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Chapter 1 Theoretical Framework	8
<i>1.1 Constructing migration: crises, threats, insecurity</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>1.2 Discourses of the North: how Europe sees Africa</i>	<i>13</i>
Chapter 2 Image Analysis	19
<i>2.1 Insecurity discourse: the migrant as threat</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>2.2 Humanitarian discourse: the European as protector</i>	<i>27</i>
Chapter 3 Smuggler as Scapegoat	30
<i>3.1 From Operation Mare Nostrum to Operation Triton</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>3.2 Renewed threat: from the migrant to the smuggler</i>	<i>35</i>
Conclusion	40
Appendix	43
Bibliography	49

INTRODUCTION

“The best witness to the Mediterranean’s age-old past is the sea itself,” wrote Fernand Braudel, to then continue into an exploration of the beginnings of the piece of water that separates and unites Europe, Africa and Asia.¹ Braudel travels back to the Paleozoic, to the very beginning of the Mediterranean, here we start in the 1950s, when Europe was making efforts to recover from the Second World War and workers were welcomed to cross the sea towards Europe.² Between the 1950s and 1970s, they came from poorer countries in the continent, but also from places outside Europe, including Turkey and India.³ With the crisis in the early 1970s, this welcoming spirit ended, but the movement of people did not stop.

Between the 1960s and 1980s, migrants coming from Africa to Europe left mostly from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. First, towards Germany, France, Belgium and Holland, then later, towards Italy and Spain.⁴ The 1980s and the 1990s saw the fortification of European borders, which made the arrival of migrants to the continent more difficult and led them to use boats to cross the sea.⁵ At end of the 1980s, “the first bodies of migrants were found on the European shores,” the result of tougher visa policies and stronger enforcement against irregular migration, especially in Spain and Italy.⁶ But, according to Heller and Pezzani, these “policies of closure” only worked to prevent migrants from travelling safely, “forcing them to resort to precarious means such as using unseaworthy vessels.”⁷ Meaning that migration did not stop, only had to continue under the shade of illegality.

¹ Fernand Braudel, *Memory and the Mediterranean* (New York: Vintage, 2002), 3-5

² Saara Koikkalainen, “Free Movement in Europe: Past and Present,” *Migration Information Source*, 2011.

³ Koikkalainen, “Free Movement in Europe.”

⁴ Hein De Haas, “The Myth of Invasion: The Inconvenient Realities of African Migration to Europe,” *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 7 (2008): 1307.

⁵ Lorenzo Pezzani and Charles Heller, *Death by Rescue* (Forensic Oceanography and Forensic Architecture, Goldsmiths, University of London, 2016). Available at www.deathbyrescue.org.

⁶ Pezzani and Heller, “Death by Rescue.”

⁷ Pezzani and Heller, “Death by Rescue.”

During the 2000s, Moroccans, Algerians and Tunisians were increasingly joined and at some point surpassed in number by migrants coming from other countries in Africa.⁸ Today, those making the cross come from Western, Central and Eastern Africa, but also from the Middle East and Southeast Asia.⁹ What they find during the journey is a route that only got more dangerous with time and that took the lives of more than 20,000 people in the past 25 years.¹⁰ According to Heller and Pezzani, “the bordering of the European Union’s maritime frontier has turned the Mediterranean into a space marked by a deep and long standing mobility conflict characterized by a deeply hierarchized and segmented mobility regime.” This regime offers the possibility of fast journeys for products and more privileged migrants, but “slow and deadly” routes for the “unwanted.”¹¹

This research is concerned with the intensification of those movements in recent years and the growing attention that they received. According to the Eurobarometer, a periodic public opinion survey carried out by the European Commission, alarm over migration increased in the European Union during the 2010s. Early in the decade, Europeans believed migration to be the fourth biggest issue of concern facing the union, among other sixteen topics (including the economy, unemployment and public finances, which came in first, second and third, respectively).¹² In 2015, migration rose to the first position, with the proportion of respondents concerned about the issue growing from 38% in May (around the end of the period covered in this research, of the “migration crisis” in the Central Mediterranean route) to 58% in November (following the beginning of the “migration crisis” in the Eastern Mediterranean route).¹³

⁸ De Haas, “The Myth of Invasion,” 1307.

⁹ De Haas, “The Myth of Invasion,” 1307.

¹⁰ Pezzani and Heller, “Death by Rescue.”

¹¹ Pezzani and Heller, “Death by Rescue.”

¹² Eurobarometer, European Commission, 5/2011. Question: What do you think are the two most important issues facing the European Union at the moment?

¹³ Eurobarometer, European Commission, 5/2015 and 11/2015.

One might claim that the growing alarm is related to an increase in the number of international migrants both worldwide and in Europe. But that line of thought is not completely correct. First, because even though migration has been increasing worldwide, both in number and as share of the total population, it is growing slower now than before.¹⁴ Therefore, even if it is true that there are more international migrants in the world today than at any moment in recent history (or since the idea of “international” and “migrant” started to exist), if the alarm over the subject was to follow the numbers, it would have to be less intense now than during the last decade. Because even if the number of international migrants went from 172.7 million to 243.7 million between 2000 and 2015, the number of international migrants increased slower during the last five-year period than during the period that came before.¹⁵ The average growth rate in the number of international migrants worldwide was 2% per year between 2000 and 2005, then 3% per year between 2005 and 2010, but then down again to 2% per year between 2010 and 2015.¹⁶

Following this same measurement, the alarm is also not justified in Europe, because the region had a lower velocity of growth in the number of migrants than other regions in the world. The average is higher in Asia and Oceania (2.8% per year), lower in Africa and Latin America (2.3% and 2.2% per year) and even lower in North America and Europe (2% per year).¹⁷ Furthermore, the increase in the number of migrants is even slower than that average in specific European countries. Within Europe, migration grows faster than average in places such as Italy and Spain (more than 6% per year), but slower than average in France, Germany, Holland and Portugal (between 0%–2% per year). This did not stop three of those four

¹⁴ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division. *International Migration Report 2015*, 5-8.

¹⁵ This estimates includes irregular migrants, but their number is not specified. The International Organization for Migration estimates that between 10% and 15% of the 214 million international migrants in 2010 were in an irregular condition. The United Nations estimates 2 and 4 million in the European Union in 2008.

¹⁶ UN-DESA-DP, *International Migration Report*, 5-8.

¹⁷ UN-DESA-DP, *International Migration Report*, 8-9.

countries with slower growth rates to name migration as the most serious issue facing the European Union, according to the Eurobarometer. (Migration was not the biggest concern only for Portugal, where the country's public finances and unemployment topped the results.)

Therefore, if the velocity of growth of international migration is slower worldwide, is slower than average in Europe than in other regions of the world and slower than average in certain countries of Europe than in others, why more concern now than before? To be fair, one could point to many other numbers that justify this concern, including the increase in detections of irregular crossings in the Central Mediterranean route, which went from 40,000 in 2013 to 150,000 in 2015, according to Frontex, the border agency of the European Union. Then what is harder to explain is the number of arrests of migrants once they arrive, enter and live in the continent. According to Palidda, the percentage of foreign prisoners in relation to the overall prison population increased in every country of the European Union between the 1980s and 2000s, reaching an average of 20% of the total prison population in Europe in 2006 (varying from an average of 5% in Eastern European countries and 37% in Western European countries).¹⁸ Interestingly, "there is no arithmetic relationship between the trend of crimes and the increase of immigrants." If that were the case, "crimes would have had to increase by at least 5 or 10 times in the past 20 years."¹⁹ Palidda also points to the fact that even when crime rates decrease, the increase in arrests of migrants persists. This indicates that criminalization comes from somewhere, except from actual crimes.

If concern over migration increases even in countries where the number of migrants grows slower than average and if migrants are being arrested more while the number of crimes committed by them is not growing, what explains this problematization of migration? This "migration-problem" stems from somewhere else than the "reality" presented in the

¹⁸ Salvatore Palidda, "A Review of the Principal European Countries," in *Racial Criminalization of Migrants in the 21st Century*, ed. Salvatore Palidda (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 23-30.

¹⁹ Palidda, "Review of the Principal European Countries," 24.

numbers. According to the literature covered below, it comes both from an anxiety derived from a constant feeling of crisis, including social, political, economical and cultural crises, and from discursive practices that frame migration as insecurity.

The literature that fundaments this research shows that, first, the problematization of migration is the result of a perceived state of political, social, economical and cultural crises and, second, that it comes into existence through the discourses ventilated by politicians, governmental bureaucrats, journalists and security officials, each constructing migration as threat according to their interests. Although a discussion of those crises would be worth pursuing, considering the state of constant crises that rules European society, this research is interested in the second aspect, the discursive construction of migrants as threats.

This research is interested in the discursive practices that framed migrants as threats as represented in the journalistic coverage published on the online version of the Guardian. But more than verifying the presence of a threat discourse, this research proposes the existence of a second framing, derived from a humanitarian discourse, which eventually conflicts with and surpasses the threat discourse. With the European divided between framing the migrant as threat or framing the migrant as victim, the smuggler appears as solution mid-way through the journalistic coverage. Following from that encounter, the threat discourse is directed to the smuggler, while the migrant is represented as receiver of humanitarian attention.

Instead of looking at the overall coverage, this research is interested in the photographic coverage. In the early 2000s, Williams pointed to the fact that the traditional definition of securitization was missing the potential to analyze images circulated in the television. According to Williams, “contemporary political communication” was “increasingly embedded within televisual images” and deserved to be investigated in the same way as

speech-based acts.²⁰ Publishing in the early 2000s, the author was unaware of the information revolution that the internet would present in the following decade, making images even more central to discussions of politics. Following from that phenomenon, this research is concerned, in the first place, with the representation of migrants, Europeans and smugglers in images, then in texts.

As mentioned above, there were at least two “migration crises” in Europe during the 2010s. The first was characterized by the movement of people in the corridor of water that goes from Libya to Italy, roughly between 2013 and 2015. While the second was characterized by a movement between Turkey and Greece, intensified in the middle of 2015. The “migration crisis” investigated in this research is the first. Therefore, among the four major sea routes coming from Africa to Europe, as defined by Frontex, this research is interested in the Central Mediterranean route, from Algeria, Tunisia and Libya to Italy and Malta.²¹ An important difference among the different “migration crises” and routes is the nationality of those making the journey. Throughout 2015, according to the United Nations, those crossing to Italy came mostly from Eritrea (23%), Nigeria (15%), Somalia (8%), Gambia (6%) and Sudan (6%).²² While those crossing to Greece came mostly from Syria (55%), Afghanistan (25%), Iraq (11%), Pakistan (3%) and Iran (3%).²³ What those movements have in common is the number of people coming from countries that are among the ten biggest sources of refugees in the world. But one essential difference is that the first group is mostly composed of people from Africa, while the second from the Middle East.

²⁰ Michael C. Williams, “Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics,” *International Studies Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (December 2003): 512.

²¹ Frontex points to four main routes: The Western African route, from Morocco, Western Sahara and Mauritania to the Canary Islands; the Western Mediterranean route, from Morocco and Algeria to Spain; the Central Mediterranean route, from Algeria, Tunisia and Libya to Italy and Malta; and the Eastern Mediterranean route, from Turkey to Greece and Cyprus.

²² United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Europe Refugees and Migrants Emergency Response, Nationality of Arrivals to Greece, Italy and Spain,” January 2015–March 2016, 2016. Available at data.unhcr.org/mediterranean.

²³ UNHCR, “Nationality of Arrivals to Greece,” Italy and Spain, 2016.

This research starts with a review of the relevant literature, including the work of Didier Bigo and Jef Huysmans, regarding insecurity and migration, and the work of Roxanne Doty and David Campbell, regarding representational practices of Africa in Europe. The second chapter is concerned with the analyses of the photographic coverage, focusing on a two-year period that goes from mid-2013 until mid-2015. Within that coverage, that amounted to more than 250 articles and more than 450 images, the periods that followed accidents involving migrant boats are investigated closely, as they are more representative of the discourses articulated to frame the events. Also out of that coverage, three prominent actors are identified, the migrant, the European and the smuggler. Their representations are described and investigated in search of the signs that show the discursive movements described above. The final chapter presents a discussion of the threat discourse and the humanitarian discourse that are articulated to understand the movements in the Mediterranean and the conflict between them.

CHAPTER 1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To begin, it is important to reinforce the idea that concerns over migration do not come as response to “reality.” According to Huysmans, “even if one accepts that the arrival of large groups of outsiders can be pretty disruptive for a community of the established, the definition of the situation and the way one tries to govern it depends on political and social processes.”²⁴ Therefore, migration is not inherently a problem, but made into a problem through certain mechanisms of meaning-making. That is the most basic assumption that underlies this research, that meaning lies above materiality, meaning that concern over migration is not reflective of objective reality but constructed socially and culturally.²⁵ What is meant by that is that the meaning assigned to migration within Europe is more determinant of how the European understands, approaches and thinks about migration than the actual number of migrants entering the continent (or any other “factual” aspect that could be cited in place of that one statistic). To exemplify how this meaning is constructed, rather than objectively derived from reality: considering the attention given to irregular migrants making the cross in the Mediterranean, one would be surprised to know that the majority of irregular migrants living in the European Union entered the region with valid documents and overstayed their visas, according to Frontex.²⁶ If the discussion on migration were to follow “facts,” Europe should be more worried about the flows of migrants found in airport lounges, including tourists, international students and white-collar workers, rather than in precarious boats.

Among others, the following four are the main assumptions that are embedded in any research based on social constructions: that our knowledge about the world is not representative of the world, not only because we used biased means to reach reality, but

²⁴ Jef Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity: Fear, Migration and Asylum in the EU* (Routledge, 2006), 2

²⁵ Jutta Weldes, *Cultures of Insecurity: States, Communities, and the Production of Danger* (University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 10

²⁶ Frontex, “Migratory Routes,” 2016. Available at <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/migratory-routes-map/>

because reality is unreachable without those means; that knowledge about the world is constructed and maintained collectively and socially, reproducing the relations of power in the societies that create them; that knowledge about the world and the meaning assigned to things conditions the way one acts towards reality, therefore if we understood the world differently, we would act differently; and that because this pieces of knowledge reflect the society that created them, they are specific to certain periods and places, meaning that knowledge accepted as true today was born in some moment in history and might die one day.²⁷

1.1 Constructing migration: crises, threats, insecurity

If reasons for the concern over migration are not found in reality, then where to look? First, the literature points to a relationship between moments when migrants are under attack, both physical attack and institutional attack, and moments of economic, political and social crises. To explore one example of this branch of the literature, Melossi identifies a political, social and cultural crisis in Europe, that combined with the inclusion of newly arrived migrants in the European working class, produces instances of xenophobic and institutional attacks against migration.²⁸ According to Melossi, these crises stem from the dying out of national identities with the advent of an European identity under the framework of the European Union and the economical disruption caused by globalization and technological advancements to societies accustomed with more traditional modes of production.²⁹ According to Melossi, since the 1970s, the arrival of migrants is met with the dissatisfaction

²⁷ Marianne W. Jørgensen and Louise J. Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (SAGE Publications, 2002), 4-6.

²⁸ Dario Melossi, "'In a Peaceful Life' Migration and the Crime of Modernity in Europe/Italy," *Punishment & Society* 5, no. 4 (October 2003): 371-97.

²⁹ Melossi, "Migration and the Crime of Modernity in Europe/Italy," 375.

of Europeans, who had their identities and social standing disrupted by processes of modernization and were then faced with both competitors and potential scapegoats.³⁰

Second, the literature points to the interests of politicians, governmental officials, journalists, security professionals and security agencies in the problematization of migration. Combined, these decision-, opinion- and policy-makers work to problematize migration, each for their own interest. According to Vollmer, since the 1970s, migration has been framed through two discourses: “threat and criminalization” and “number games.”³¹ The first works to move migration policy into the realm of national security, working to construct migration as a phenomenon that threatens European welfare, national security and culture.³² These practices were widespread, present in every region of the continent, but they were articulated differently depending on the country: in France, the migrant is more commonly framed as criminal, with emphasis on the threat presented to security, while in Austria, the migrant is represented as threat to the welfare system.³³ The second discourse identified by Vollmer involves the numbers and statistics that are circulated to problematize migration. “Higher numbers justify control and enforcement policies, whereas lower numbers ease the political landscape,” the one chosen depending on the interest of the speaker.³⁴

According to Berkhout, who looked at political and journalistic discourse in seven Western European countries, migration is more associated with “crime and security” (20%) than any other topic, including “politics and institutions” (13%), “economy and welfare” (11%) and “society and culture” (2%).³⁵ According to Tsoukala, who looked at discourses

³⁰ Melossi, “Migration and the Crime of Modernity in Europe/Italy,” 375.

³¹ Bastian A. Vollmer, “Policy Discourses on Irregular Migration in the EU: ‘Number Games’ and ‘Political Games,’” *European Journal of Migration & Law* 13, no. 3 (July 2011): 317–39.

³² Vollmer, “Policy Discourses on Irregular Migration,” 324–325.

³³ Vollmer, “Policy Discourses on Irregular Migration,” 324–325.

³⁴ Vollmer, “Policy Discourses on Irregular Migration,” 330.

³⁵ Joost Berkhout, “Changing Claims and Changing Frames in the Politics of Migration in Western Europe, 1995–2009,” Social Science Research Network Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research

articulated by politicians, security officials and journalists in Italy and Greece, migrants were articulated as threats to European society, economy, security and identity. The processes identified constituted “the classic pattern of construction of social enemies.”³⁶

Moving from journalists, politicians and bureaucrats, this section now looks at how security officials and security agencies help to construct migrants as threats. According to Bigo, there are various mechanisms that work to frame migration as threat, including, first, an identification of the state with the body, which resides in the idea of the inside as homogenous and separate from the outside and with “an image of immigration associated with an outsider coming inside, as a danger to the homogeneity of the state;” second, the fear that governmental officials have of losing power over the population and control over the territory, which leads them to ventilate threats in order to maintain their positions; third, the blending of internal and external security and the resulting practices of security officials, who “transfer the legitimacy they gain from struggles against terrorists, criminals, spies, and counterfeiters toward other targets,” most notably migrants; fourth, the development and implementation of technologies and administrative practices of surveillance and control, which include “population profiling, risk assessment, statistical calculation, category creation;” and, finally, a generalized “unease” stemming from the inability to control every aspect of existence and the uncertainty and anxiety resulting from that.³⁷

According to Huysmans, following from Bigo, Europe lives in a time of “unease” and migration is one field where this unease is articulated, with migrants being increasingly perceived as threats.³⁸ According to Huysmans, following from Bigo, “security framing can

Network, October 2012). The countries are Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and United Kingdom.

³⁶ Tsoukala, Anastassia, “Looking at Migrants as Enemies,” in *Controlling Frontiers: Free Movement Into and Within Europe*, ed. Didier Bigo and Elspeth Guild (Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 185-186.

³⁷ Didier Bigo, “Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 27, no. 1 (February 2002): 63-66.

³⁸ Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity*, 45-47.

discursively and/or administratively link up phenomena like asylum and immigration with more traditional security phenomena facilitating a transfer of insecurity from the latter to the former phenomena.”³⁹ This framing derives from events that happened in the last four decades, including the increased velocity of European integration during the 1980s. The Schengen Agreements, for instance, abolished the internal borders of the European Union, but ended up working to increase the fortification at the external borders. And even though it was a policy that dealt with the circulation of people and goods, it was built with a “strong focus on policing borders and internal security.”⁴⁰ Another reason for the connection between migration and security in Europe was the increased concern over the subject that followed the September 11 attacks.⁴¹

According to Huysmans, migration is not represented as an organized military threat (although references to naval warfare exist in more extreme discussions surrounding migration in the Mediterranean, with migrants compared to invading armies and calls for battleships to be deployed against their boats) and migration is also not presented as a more specific and personal threat (although discomforts caused by migration in coastal Mediterranean communities are mentioned in those more extreme discussions); migration is actually represented as “endangering a collective way of life that defines a community of people.”⁴² Even more than that, Huysmans writes that Europe actually needs to turn migration into a source of insecurity, in order to maintain the community’s internal cohesion. “Securitization is characterized by a circular logic of defining and modulating hostile factors for the purpose of countering them politically and administratively.”⁴³ In this sense, “security

³⁹ Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity*, 4.

⁴⁰ Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity*, 4.

⁴¹ Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity*, 2.

⁴² Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity*, 45-47.

⁴³ Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity*, 61.

policy and politics reasserts and claims a political space of freedom,” but it also claims that this space is under threat.⁴⁴

1.2 Discourses of the North: how Europe sees Africa

As pointed out earlier, the wide majority of those crossing from Libya to Italy come from Africa, therefore the first part of this chapter looks at how the North usually approaches and represents the South in discursive practices, according to Doty, while the second part looks at European representations of Africa in photographs published in the media. According to Doty, encounters between North and South happen through constructed discourses and identities. They also reflect the relations of power in place in the world and have as their source the most powerful actor, which in this case, leans towards the North.⁴⁵ Second, discourses are reflective of the ideals of the powerful. In the case of relations between the North and the South, these include freedom and democracy.⁴⁶ In the case of Europe and Africa, European attitude is strongly influenced by humanitarianism. Third, Doty reminds us that images of the self are constructed in relation to the other. Following from Edward Said’s proposition that European constructions of the “Orient” speak more about Europe than about the “Orient,” Northern constructions of the South and European constructions of Africa speak more about the first than about the second.⁴⁷

Doty points to the “representational strategies,” used to categorize and position the Southerner in relation to the Northerner.⁴⁸ These include, first, presupposition, which “creates background knowledge that is taken to be true” and “entails an implicit theorization of how

⁴⁴ Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity*, 61.

⁴⁵ Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations* (University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 5.

⁴⁶ Doty, *Imperial Encounters*, 3.

⁴⁷ Doty, *Imperial Encounters*, 3.

⁴⁸ Doty, *Imperial Encounters*, 10-11.

the world works and also an elaboration of the nature of its inhabitants.” This involves naturalization, when the presupposed ideas are made natural, often through repetition. Second, classification, which works by “placing human beings into the categories in which they ‘naturally’ belong.” This is related to hierarchies, which are “established based upon the presumed essential character of various kinds of human beings.” Third, denial, in which the Northerner refuses the Southerner the chance of possessing agency and having content, effectively opening the other as “blank spaces waiting to be filled in by Western writing.”⁴⁹

These strategies are made possible and work according to certain mechanisms. First, they are strongly based on surveillance, which is the observation method through which it is possible for the subject to understand, classify and position the object.⁵⁰ Second, these mechanisms work in consideration and in respect to the other elements of the discourse. According to Doty, “what defines a particular kind of subject is, in large part, the relationships that subject is positioned in relative to other kinds of subjects.”⁵¹ Therefore, according to Doty, these strategies also work to “establish various kinds of relationships between subjects and between subjects and objects,” including “opposition, identity, similarity, and complementarity.” Both surveillance and positioning are relevant for this research, because photographs can work and have worked, in the case of Africa, as mode of surveillance, classification and positioning, and because objects can be positioned in the frame as they are positioned in discourse, according to relations of power.

Third, these strategies work according to one major logic, in which things that are similar are grouped together and in opposition to things that are different. “Identities are presumed to be based upon foundational essences and are portrayed as being merely different

⁴⁹ Doty, *Imperial Encounters*, 10-11.

⁵⁰ Doty, *Imperial Encounters*, 11.

⁵¹ Doty, *Imperial Encounters*, 11.

from other identities.”⁵² Fourth, these mechanisms are always in place, but intensify in periods of instability. According to Doty, “these representational strategies are intensified in times of crisis, when naturalized identities and the existing order are at risk of being called into question.” For instance, in moments when the North is faced with “potential loss of control and authority.”⁵³ Therefore, the events described in this research can be perceived as crisis not in the sense that is commonly proposed, of “migration crisis,” but in the sense of an affront to the “control and authority” of Europe over the migrants and their movements.

It is interesting to consider this proposition by Doty in relation to the concepts of ingroups and outgroups. According to Neumann, “lineation of an ‘in-group’ must necessarily entail delineation from a number of ‘out-groups’, and that delineation is an active and ongoing part of identity formation.”⁵⁴ According to this approach, groups set boundaries around themselves that clarify who is inside and outside. This circle is set around those who share certain traits and leave outside those who do not.⁵⁵ Self/other then equals inside/outside. “The insiders in a we-group are in a relation of peace, order, law, government, and industry to each other,” but relations with outsiders can be of “war and plunder.”⁵⁶ Finally, according to Neumann, whenever people categorize themselves, they end up highlighting the similarities shared by those who are inside and the differences with those outside.⁵⁷

The second part of this section looks at how Europe usually approaches and represents Africa in discursive practices. If one can think of Orientalism, as identified in the work of Edward Said, or Balkanism, as in the work of Maria Todorova, Campbell writes about the potential for the coining of Africanism, following from the intensity with which Africa is

⁵² Doty, *Imperial Encounters*, 11.

⁵³ Doty, *Imperial Encounters*, 12.

⁵⁴ Iver B. Neumann, “Self and Other in International Relations,” *European Journal of International Relations* 2, no. 2 (June 1996), 142.

⁵⁵ Neumann, “Self and Other,” 142.

⁵⁶ Michael A. Hogg and Dominic Abrams, *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes* (Routledge, 1988), 17; cited in Neumann, “Self and Other,” 144.

⁵⁷ Hogg and Abrams, *Social Identifications*, 21; cited in Neumann, “Self and Other,” 144.

homogenized and otherized in the eyes of the European.⁵⁸ According to Campbell, the overall discourse that informs this encounter is that of humanitarianism. “Humanitarianism is in many respects the default option for the international community’s understanding of African crises.”⁵⁹ In the case of Darfur, this framing was intensified after an interview in which a coordinator for the United Nation told the media that the conflict were “the world’s worst humanitarian crisis” and comparable to the genocide in Rwanda. This statement conditioned the coverage towards these “modes of representation:” humanitarianism and genocide.⁶⁰

Reading Campbell’s analysis of the ways in which the events in Darfur were represented in photographs, one identifies the discursive strategies pointed by Doty. But these strategies are interconnected and do not happen in straightforward and compartmentalized ways. Therefore, instances of categorization, presupposition, naturalization, denial and positioning are present in combination in the representations of Darfur. Among these representations, Campbell shows the popularity of images that position the African as passive and worth of pity.⁶¹ This sort of positioning was also found in an examination of the photographic coverage of the Ethiopian famine, in the mid-1980s.⁶² Campbell also shows that the coverage was in large part based on assigning fixed identities to those who are pictured, which involves processes of categorization. “This stabilization of Darfur’s multiple identities is most obvious in the way the conflict is rendered as one of ‘Arabs’ versus ‘Africans.’”⁶³ According to Campbell, the humanitarian discourse that surrounds representations of Darfur involves this “reification of fluid identities into fixed forms.”

⁵⁸ Campbell, “Geopolitics and Visuality,” 363.

⁵⁹ Campbell, “Geopolitics and Visuality,” 368.

⁶⁰ Campbell, “Geopolitics and Visuality,” 368.

⁶¹ Campbell, “Geopolitics and Visuality,” 368.

⁶² Nikki van der Gaag and Cathy Nash, “Images of Africa: United Kingdom Report” (1987), 41; cited in Campbell, “Geopolitics and Visuality,” 368.

⁶³ Campbell, “Geopolitics and Visuality,” 363.

Finally, the last section of this chapter is concerned with the relationship between discourses and photography. Campbell proposes the idea that photographs are not simply descriptive of reality, but actually work to construct reality. This means that photographs both represent and construct the events. This comes from the idea that there are words that describe things, but there are also words that are capable of producing the things that they describe.⁶⁴ Campbell expands this proposition by writing that photographs are also capable of constructing the reality that they are supposed to portray. The performative aspect of the photographic coverage of Darfur involves the fact that once those images coined and popularized certain “modes of representation” (for instance, that the conflict was between Arabs and Africans or Northerners and Southerners), these constructions were fed back into the events, working to produce that division in “reality.”⁶⁵

Furthermore, according to Campbell, when representing and constructing the conflict as humanitarian crisis and genocide, the photographs condition the kinds of policies enacted towards Darfur. This follows from the idea that discourses contain not only categorizations of the things of the world, but also the way one should respond to those things, inspired by those same categories. “The plethora of refugee photographs does not just tell as that there are millions displaced. They tell as how we should feel about Darfur as a place where the innocent are displaced and appear before us in ways that recall earlier conflicts.”⁶⁶

According to Campbell, photography has an increased power, because it feeds on the privilege given to sight in production of knowledge in Europe and because it hides the mechanisms that make it possible, giving an aspect of faithful truth. Photography carries an intrinsic truth-value: because so mimetic and because produced through mechanical

⁶⁴ John Langshaw Austin and Marina Sbisa, *How to Do Things with Words* (Harvard University Press, 1975), 6–7; cited in Campbell, “Geopolitics and Visuality,” 377.

⁶⁵ Campbell, “Geopolitics and Visuality,” 377.

⁶⁶ Campbell, “Geopolitics and Visuality,” 380.

processes, they are taken to be an objective representation of the real thing.⁶⁷ Even more when presented as “news.” Then the photograph, which already presents itself as truthful representation, intensifies its aspect of being faithful to reality, borrowing from the journalistic constructions of neutrality, fairness and objectivity.⁶⁸ And because both of these mechanisms are hidden, “the photograph is a construction that obscures its own production.”⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Campbell, “Geopolitics and Visuality,” 379.

⁶⁸ Campbell, “Geopolitics and Visuality,” 379.

⁶⁹ Campbell, “Geopolitics and Visuality,” 379.

CHAPTER 2 IMAGE ANALYSIS

This research is interested in the discursive practices that framed migration as they are presented in the photographic coverage published on the online version of the Guardian. There are four main reasons behind the choice of the Guardian and one main reason behind the choice of this specific period. First, although newspapers that fall under both extremes of the political spectrum are interesting, being liberal and left-leaning, the Guardian offers a coverage that supposedly stands on the side of the migrant. While it is predictable that most right-leaning newspapers will follow ideals of individualism and nativism, which are negative for the migrant, it is also predictable that most left-leaning publications lean towards ideas of solidarity and cosmopolitanism, which are thought to be positive for the migrant. It is this assumption that left-leaning discourse can be positive for the migrant that is under consideration with the choice of the Guardian as the vehicle of analysis. The point being made is that both left-leaning and right-leaning publications are product and producers of discourses, therefore offering representations that have their blind spots and hidden biases. Although in different ways, both come with assumptions and offer limitations to thinking. Both also deserve to be the target of critique. Maybe even more in the case of left-leaning newspapers, because one would not expect that the narratives that it ventilates could be negative for the migrant.

Second, according to Hallin and Mancini's division of the Western European media system, the Guardian lies within the North Atlantic model, which is considered more professional, information-oriented and independent from political pressure than newspapers in the Mediterranean region. (The third category contained in Hallin and Mancini's typology, the

North/Central Europe model, was not considered due to language barriers.)⁷⁰ Third, one would expect that newspapers that are closer to the Mediterranean would publish more pictures of the events than newspapers that are far, but that was not the case. Comparison between the online versions of newspapers from both models showed that the online press in England published more photographs of the events than the online press in Italy. Fourth, the online version was chosen instead of the print version because, today, images published digitally might be as, if not more, important than images published in print newspapers, considering the intensity of their broadcast. Furthermore, the centrality of images in social media is also one of the reasons: when shared, these articles are summarized to their titles, subtitles and images.

The period of analysis goes from June 2013 to June 2015. Articles about migration in the Central Mediterranean route are published throughout the period, but there is an increase in number as time passes, going from an almost absent coverage between January and June 2013 to at least five articles per month between January and June 2015. This two-year period was chosen because it represents the peak of the coverage of the events in the Central Mediterranean route. Before that period, although the movement exists, the coverage is sparse. After that period, the coverage seems to “explode,” due to the events in the Eastern Mediterranean route.

The aftermath of major shipwrecks is the moment when the media attempts to understand and offer an understanding of what happened. This could be said to be the moments in which the discourses are performed more strongly. For this reason, although considering the whole period, the analysis focuses on the intense coverage that followed major accidents in October 2013, September 2014 and April 2015. These accidents were

⁷⁰ Daniel C. Hallin and Paolo Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 67-68, 73-75

bigger than the others in the period, each involving hundreds of migrants and resulting in hundreds of deaths.

To give an idea of the tone of the coverage that is discussed below, these were the first titles that appeared as the accidents were noticed by the press. Among the 29 articles of October 2013: “4,000 immigrants reach Europe by boat in 48 hours” and “Scores of migrants die as boat sinks off Lampedusa.” Among the 34 articles of September 2014: “Scores feared dead as migrants’ boat sinks off Libya,” “200 migrants feared drowned after boat sinks off Libya coast” and “Migrant boat was ‘deliberately sunk’ in Mediterranean sea, killing 500.” Among the 85 articles of April 2015: “Italian coastguard and navy rescue 1,500 migrants in less than 24 hours,” “Italy rescues nearly 6,000 migrants in a single weekend” and “Hundreds of migrants believed to have drowned off Libya after boat capsizes.”

The search query used was “migrant Mediterranean boat.” The results amounted to almost 1,000 articles. After removing those that were not directly related with the events in the Central Mediterranean route and, within those, the articles that did not have images, one-fourth of the articles were saved. The total numbers of articles considered was 256 and the total number of images was 463. The majority of articles had between one and four images, while the maximum of photos in one article was 15. Repeated pictures were considered, with their repetition indicating their significance. Videos were also considered, because when opened in the Guardian, videos are paused, therefore presenting themselves as pictures. Besides images, the main pieces of text (title, subtitle and captions) were also considered. This, though, was not ideal, as the focus of the analysis was in the messages sent through the photographs, not through the articles.

Table 1: Photographic coverage between June 2013 and June 2015

Period	Articles	Images
June 2013–December 2013	37	58
January 2014–June 2014	15	37
July 2014–December 2014	50	79
January 2015–June 2015	154	289
Total	256	463

Before going into the analysis, it is important to remember that these 463 images were preceded by a number of choices. First, the choice to illustrate the article, considering that many in the initial selection did not have images. Second, the choice to illustrate with photographs instead of illustrations. Third, the choice to use those photographs instead of the multitude of other options offered by photographers. This final point is the most important, because, following a point made by Campbell, it is important to have in mind that the images that were published were selected among a multiplicity of options produced by photographers on the ground. In this way, even if unintentionally, these photographs edit, exclude and highlight certain aspects of reality. Finally, also in a point made by Campbell, the repetition of those cuts is what shows which are the stronger elements of the discourse.

Regarding the producers of the images, many came from the usual sources, including professional photographers and photo agencies, but there were also photographs produced by security forces and independent activists. The majority of images were made by professional photographers, often in association with photo agencies, including Reuters, Getty Images, Associated Press and Agence France-Presse. But the coverage also had images, videos, screen grabs and screen photos produced by others than professional photographers. Among those, the most interesting for this research are the images produced by security forces, including the Italian Coast Guard, and sent directly to the media through press offices. Another interesting set were the images produced by activists, “good Samaritans” and members of humanitarian

organizations, showing their humanitarian activity, which were either posted on social media and reproduced in the articles or sent directly to the media.

Images were coded according to who was shown. Following from that, three major actors were identifiable in the coverage: the migrant, the European and the smuggler. While the European and the migrant are present throughout, the smuggler only appears in photographs close to the end of the period, in 2015. There were 174 images showing migrants, both within groups, before leaving Northern Africa, inside boats, being rescued and after arriving to Southern Europe, and isolated, with closer framings, including individual portraits. Another 47 images showed Europeans, including politicians, volunteers, security officials, rescuers, opinion-makers, soldiers, beach-goers, activists and religious leaders. Because much of the focus is on the relationship between the migrant and the European, photographs in which both are shown together were coded separately, amounting to 184 images. Finally, 7 images showed smugglers. There were also 54 images that did not fit those categories, because they did not show people (the majority in this category showing boats), because they showed people that were unrelated to the events in the Mediterranean or because they were paintings and illustrations.

It is important to remember that none of these images depicts the “real” migrants, the “real” Europeans and the “real” smugglers. In representation and in discourse, these human beings are reduced to simplifications of their complexity. One aspect of their existence (their gentleness, their desperation, their proactivity, their valor, their mischievousness) being highlighted in the image. In that sense, they are constructed in discourse and do not reflect the complexity of people in reality. Not because those involved in the production and broadcast of those images intended things that way, but because that is how representations work, through simplifications and categorizations. Although complex in their ethical implications, this research understands these simplification and categories as methodologically useful, as they

can also be seen as ideal types: simplifications of complicated social realities into manageable abstract constructs.

Table 2: Number of images according to category

Category	Images
Migrant	174
European	47
Smuggler	7
European and migrant	184
Other	51
Total	463

2.1 Insecurity discourse: the migrant as threat

The presentation of the migrant as threat happens through five strategies identified in the coverage. The first two are more direct, while the third and fourth are less direct. The first and second strategy can be said to “depict security,” as they include visual elements or visual effects that work to reflect and produce insecurity. The third and fourth strategies are related to the way in which the migrants are often presented as large groups. The fifth strategy also works to reinforce the threatening potential that migration presents to Europe, but does not happen through depictions of migrants, but of security officials.

The first strategy relates to the fact that migrants are often framed with visual elements that evoke an idea of insecurity. They are shown behind bars, along uniformed soldiers, inside police cars, with covered faces and along policing boats. Two photographs from the coverage, taken in Malta, serves as an example of how the framing is powerful. The first image shows a group of migrants inside a bus which has the word “pulizija” written on the side, invoking feelings of insecurity; while the second image chooses to highlight one child that is sitting

inside the bus, cropping the picture and removing the word “pulizija” from the frame, turning the picture into one that invokes feelings of empathy.

The second strategy relates to the fact that some images, mostly those produced by the Italian coastguard and other security agencies, present a visual effect, due to the low quality of the mechanisms that produced them, that produces a strong feeling of insecurity. This visual effect is related to the fact that these images are often pixelated and blurred or have their colors altered. Some remind the viewer of radars, while others contain visual elements similar to those found in the viewfinder of guns. One of them, produced by the Italian coastguard, shows a small group of migrants inside a boat. It is cropped, but the words “target position” and a time code are identifiable on the corners. In the center, because the image was produced with an infrared camera, the migrants are shown as black figures, their human traits unidentifiable. Finally, their boat is framed in a viewfinder similar to those of guns.

The third strategy happens through the blurring or hiding of facial features, working to dehumanize the migrant and ultimately to reinforce their depiction as threat. This dehumanization usually happens when people are depicted as part of large groups or, more strongly, when the features that define them as humans are pixelated, creating a visual dehumanized mass.⁷¹ This point was made by Bleiker and colleagues through an analysis of the photographic coverage of migration in Australia. According to the authors, two-thirds of images published on the front page of Australian newspapers showed migrants as medium or large groups. The authors also noticed the presence of images of boats, without any people on them, something that also reinforces this dehumanization. This kind of depiction shows the migrant as “potential threat” and “sets in place mechanisms of security and border control.”⁷²

⁷¹ Roland Bleiker et al., “The Visual Dehumanisation of Refugees,” *Australian Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 4 (December 2013), 399

⁷² Bleiker et al., “The Visual Dehumanisation of Refugees,” 399.

The fourth strategy is related to the fact that when migrants are shown as groups, they are presented as similar to invading armies. That impression is enhanced in photographs where migrants are shown aligned in neatly organized lines, which are similar to those of armies or battalions in formation. This theme is visible in images of migrants in land, both when they are shown seated in detention centers in Libya and Italy, and during the journey, when they are shown as organized masses inside the boats.

Combined, the third and fourth strategies can be associated with the metaphors of “wave” and “flood,” which are popular in descriptions of migration and work to dehumanize the migrant and depict them as large invading masses. Charteris-Black identified this type of reference in the migration discourse articulated by British right-wing political parties.⁷³ These liquid-related metaphors try to construct migration as natural disaster and the country as container. In the case of Britain, they “evoke deeper cultural and historical experience related to invasion and control over the sea as the cause of earlier national glory.”⁷⁴ They also create an idea of an inside that is bounded and protected from an outside, which attempts for constant invasions. “Disaster metaphors arouse fears of destruction by penetration from without, while container metaphors arouse fears of a build up of an unacceptable level of pressure from within the container leading to explosion.”⁷⁵

Finally, the fifth strategy is the depiction of security agents in their workplace, dressed in military uniforms or surrounded by elements that “depict security.” Although images in this category do not show migrants, they contribute to the construction of migration as threatening. These photographs show security officials in headquarters, working to keep the boundaries of Europe “safe.” One image shows four men dressed in black suits and sitting in

⁷³ Jonathan Charteris-Black, “Britain as a Container: Immigration Metaphors in the 2005 Election Campaign,” *Discourse & Society* 17, no. 5 (September 2006), 563–81.

⁷⁴ Charteris-Black, “Britain as a Container,” 579.

⁷⁵ Charteris-Black, “Britain as a Container,” 579.

front of their computers in the control room of the Italian coastguard, in Rome, while one of them looks at a set of four red telephones. Another image shows the captain that leads the Italian maritime rescue operation in a control center. In the foreground, the map of the Mediterranean. Another photograph shows soldiers inside a boat, while the captions mentions the “ships, aircrafts and drones” that will “monitor the activity of smuggling boats.”

2.2 Humanitarian discourse: the European as protector

But along the threat discourse described above, there is another equally important narrative, which gains strength as the coverage evolves, the humanitarian discourse. This appears through five strategies. The first, second and third work to portray the European in positions of subject and the migrants in position of object. Migrants are often shown being helped, saved and handled, while Europeans are often shown in the position of helper, rescuer and provider. The fourth and fifth are related to civilians and politicians. While the civilian is not so relevant in the threat discourse, here, this group gains some prominence in the staging of protests, tributes and vigils, which reinforce the humanitarian discourse. Similarly not prominent in the threat discourse, politicians are present here giving speeches about the events and in meetings where policies are discussed, looking proactive and reinforcing the subject and object differentiation.

First among the strategies that reinforce the positioning of subjects and objects, comes the fact that migrants are often shown as desperate and exhausted, therefore deserving of humanitarian care, which is provided by the European. Migrants are depicted crying, kneeling with their hands on their heads, hugging each other in desperation, lying down in exhaustion, wet and covered in protective blankets, fainting and being helped by rescuers. At the same time, Europeans are shown giving bags with food, helping migrants as they try to walk,

carrying children on their arms, raising migrants from the beach floor as they are hit by waves. One image shows a shirtless man raising a woman from the water and then carrying her. In the article, the man is called a “hero.” In another image, as a European boat approaches a migrant boat, a rescuer (wearing protective clothes, masks and gloves) extends a hand for a group that is about to jump on the rescuing boat. The image literally shows a European offering a helping hand, a metaphor that is present in other photographs.

Second, the differentiation between subject and object is made very clear visually, with Europeans shown repeatedly in positions of power, while migrants are shown constantly in the position of submission. They are visually separated not only by obvious differences, including physical traits and clothes, but also in the ways that both characters are positioned in reality and how they are framed in the photograph. In many images, migrants are shown seated, with standing Europeans watching, as if guarding. Other images frame the whole scene from the perspective or point of view of the European. While others show the isolated official in the foreground and the mass of migrants in the background. Finally, oftentimes, Europeans are shown waving orders to migrants: telling them to seat or stay put. In summary, these images make clear who is in the position of dominator and who is in position of dominated. Furthermore, Europeans are often shown wearing white protective clothes along with protective masks and gloves, something that speaks to the association between migrants and health risks and the visual metaphor of the migrant as pollutant.⁷⁶

Third, Europeans are shown in the ultimate position of agent and migrants are shown in the ultimate position of object in the numerous images of the dead. In this photographs, body bags and coffins are shown being manipulated or surrounded by Europeans. Rescuers are shown in formation, politicians are shown in grave silence, religious leaders are shown

⁷⁶ J. David Cisneros, “Contaminated Communities: The Metaphor of ‘Immigrant as Pollutant’ in Media Representations of Immigration,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 11, no. 4 (2008), 569–601.

leading prayers. One image is strong in meaning, as it shows two soldiers holding each other's back to support a coffin. Although simply depicting a technique to carry weight, the image gains strong connotations of valor, morality and honor. Another photograph shows a hangar with tens of coffins in the foreground and a line of soldiers, rescuers and volunteers standing in formation in the background, also giving a sense of valor, morality and honor. Not by chance, these concepts appear repeatedly in the coverage, often associated with the idea that those are European ideals that should be held in receiving the migrants.

Fourth, civilians are often shown performing humanitarianism. These include images of a volunteer boat leaving a port in Hamburg to do rescuing in the Mediterranean, their members described as “good Samaritans;” a group throwing flowers at the sea in Italy; a large group of people in the coast of Malta lighting candles in a vigil; and, finally, a protest that consists of body bags aligned in a beach in Brighton with a sign that reads “Don’t let them drown.” Among these, one image stands out as it exemplifies one point that could be made about this “humanitarianism.” In this photograph, three men are shown throwing a wreath in the waters of the Mediterranean. What is significant is the accidental framing of two film cameras, what looks like two flashes and one orange microphone. This serves as reminder that the tribute might even matter, but the recording and broadcasting are equally important. And the fifth strategy consists of the numerous images where European politicians are depicted giving speeches and meeting with other political leaders, which also works to reinforce who has the agency in the situation. One image that is rich in symbols shows, on the foreground, Matteo Renzi, the prime minister of Italy, then behind him, the Italian and the European flag, then behind those, a large oil painting depicting a religious leader blessing a hectic group.

CHAPTER 3 SMUGGLER AS SCAPEGOAT

Deriving from the representations of the three characters described in the last chapter, this research wants to propose that discursive strategies visible in the photographs constructed the irregular migrant as threat, but a humanitarian discourse worked to interrupt that construction. This happened because the events in the Mediterranean were also framed as humanitarian emergency, therefore calling for humanitarian responses. Because a normalization of the practice of irregular migration would ensue if this humanitarian discourse were the only one framing the events, a new threat had to be found. This came in the form of the smuggler, which was constructed as threat in order maintain the problematization of migration.

It is important to discuss humanitarianism briefly, because this discourse comes with a number of assumptions and limitations to action, therefore conditioning possible responses to migration. When framed as “humanitarian emergency,” the increase in movement in the Mediterranean and the cases of drowning that resulted from that movement are placed on the same shelf as hurricanes, nuclear accidents, tsunamis, terrorist attacks, famines, mass killings, floods, civil conflicts and earthquakes. These are “humanitarian emergencies” and, because they are emergencies, they are exceptions to the “normal” course of history and happen outside the “normal” order of events.⁷⁷ According to Calhoun, “the very idea of the emergency emphasizes the immediacy of each occurrence and derives a significant part of its capacity to command attention and mobilize resources from this sense of immediacy.” But the impression of exception is just that, an impression. As Calhoun writes, to anyone looking close enough, it is clear how events that are usually termed as emergencies and exceptions are

⁷⁷ Craig Calhoun, “The Idea of Emergency: Humanitarian Action and Global (Dis)Order,” International Legal Theory Colloquium, Institute for International Law and Justice, 2009. Later published in Didier Fassin and Mariella Pandolfi, eds. *Contemporary States of Emergency: The Politics of Military and Humanitarian Interventions*. New York: Zone Books, 2013.

actually inserted in specific contexts and are not detached from “normality.”⁷⁸ These contexts are often complex, especially when compared to the summaries that they become when framed as “humanitarian emergencies.”

The emergency “depends on the normal: the peaceful, the calm, the planned” and “gains its conceptual clarity from contrast.”⁷⁹ According to Calhoun, in a world that is constructed as respecting a “global order,” the “humanitarian emergency” is considered an instance of disorder. This “global order” can be defined as follows: a planet of nation-states that respect certain rules, including “power, stability, and interest,” and enter into relations with one another, including “alliances, balances of power, rivalries.” But that also cares for the flows that run across them, “of goods, or people, or ideas, or diseases,” and for the eventuality that these flows might fall outside of their control.⁸⁰ The “global order” is then disrupted by those who escape the managerial impulse of the nation-state and the disorder that ensues must be “fixed” so normalcy can be recovered.⁸¹

Events in the Mediterranean are framed as emergencies in the discourse produced by politicians, humanitarian organizations, journalists and security officials, each using this category for their own interest. They either initiate or reinforce the simplification: if the event is not already framed as emergency, it becomes through their movements (speeches, awareness campaigns, articles, press releases). Among many other possible reasons, the politician uses the simplicity of the “emergency” to show and justify their actions and positions; the humanitarian organization uses the impact contained in the imagery of “emergency” to attract donations; the journalist reproduces the simplification in their articles,

⁷⁸ Calhoun, “The Idea of Emergency,” 16.

⁷⁹ Calhoun, “The Idea of Emergency,” 16.

⁸⁰ Calhoun, “The Idea of Emergency,” 17.

⁸¹ Calhoun, “The Idea of Emergency,” 17.

as simplicity and directedness are the natural mode of breaking news; the security official uses the “emergency” to justify their work, budgets and practices.

“Humanitarian emergencies” come imbued with certain demands, which limit the possible actions and policies that can be taken in response. In that sense, one could say that in the same way that the photograph carries a demand for interpretation, the emergency “carries a demand for action.”⁸² One major assumption behind the “humanitarian emergency,” as discussed above, is that they are diversions from order, which means that a solution must be found so order can be recovered. Therefore, while emergencies are constructed as “exceptions to normal order,” humanitarianism is constructed as “the special action they demand.”⁸³ This leaves Europe looking for another problem behind the emergency, another problem that could possibly be “fixed.”

In the case of the Mediterranean, the problem could have been personified in the migrant, but it did not, because another assumption that comes with the “humanitarian emergency” is that the treatment given for those who are positioned as victims is one of humanitarianism. Therefore, even though Europe saw migration in the Mediterranean as “problematic,” because of the way the discourse was structured, the migrant was not placed in the usual position of threat. Having done so would counter the way Europe wanted to perceive itself. The irony resides in the fact that even though humanitarianism is shown in the pictures, the policies enacted by the European Union in the waters of the Mediterranean are the opposite of humanitarian.

⁸² Calhoun, “The Idea of Emergency,” 17.

⁸³ Calhoun, “The Idea of Emergency,” 25.

3.1 From Operation Mare Nostrum to Operation Triton

During the period covered in this research, the European approach to the Mediterranean changed from a policy of rescue to a policy of border policing. After the first major accident covered in this research, in October 2013, the Italian government established Operation Mare Nostrum, which lasted until October 2014. In this framework, the Italian Navy operated vessels, frigates, helicopters and aircrafts, among other sea and air units, that searched and helped migrants and boats in distress in the Mediterranean.⁸⁴ According to the Italian Navy, during the period, there were more than 400 operations that rescued more than 150,000 migrants.⁸⁵ Furthermore, Mare Nostrum covered a wide geographical range, getting closer to the Libyan coast and therefore saving more lives.⁸⁶ It also took migrants, even those rescued far from Europe, to European territory. According to Heller and Pezzani, these aspects of the operation were unprecedented and represented a break with previous practices of border enforcement and rescue operations. The framework was complimented by the Human Rights Council of the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration. Critics claimed that Mare Nostrum worked as pull factor, attracting migrants to make the dangerous cross, as they would think that, because of the operation, they would reach Europe successfully in any case.⁸⁷

Operation Mare Nostrum was interrupted in October 2014, because it was too costly for Italy. What followed was Operation Triton, which was administered by Frontex, the border agency of the European Union. This new operation also carried out search and rescue missions using aircrafts and ships, but it was considerably cheaper and smaller.⁸⁸ While Mare

⁸⁴ Italian Navy, "Mare Nostrum Operation." Available at <http://www.marina.difesa.it/EN/operations/Pagine/MareNostrum.aspx>.

⁸⁵ Italian Navy, "Mare Nostrum Operation."

⁸⁶ Lorenzo Pezzani and Charles Heller, *Death by Rescue* (Forensic Oceanography/Forensic Architecture, Goldsmiths, University of London, 2016). Available at www.deathbyrescue.org.

⁸⁷ Pezzani and Heller, "Death by Rescue."

⁸⁸ Pezzani and Heller, "Death by Rescue."

Nostrum spent 9 million euros per month and had a wider range of ships and aircrafts covering the region, Triton spent 3 million euros per month and had a smaller range. According to Heller and Pezzani, while Mare Nostrum covered Italian and Libyan waters, Triton stayed within 55 kilometers of Lampedusa, far less than the coverage of the previous operation. Finally, Mare Nostrum and Triton had different priorities: the first was more than anything a rescue operation, while the main mission of the second was border patrol.⁸⁹ According to Heller and Pezzani, ships and aircrafts under Triton would not proactively search for migrants in distress in the Mediterranean, but would only work to rescue migrants after notified by the Italian Navy.

According to Heller and Pezzani, the change increased in 30 times the chances of migrants dying in the Mediterranean. To have an idea, with similar numbers of migrants crossing, the average went from 2 deaths among 1000 migrants under Mare Nostrum to 60 deaths among 1000 migrants under Triton.⁹⁰ “While in the first four months of 2014, more than 26,000 had crossed and 60 deaths had been recorded, in the same period of 2015 an almost identical number of crossings had occurred, but the number of deaths had increased to 1,687.” In response, the European Union promised to increase rescuing efforts. It did so in parts, but not enough. “While Frontex’s operational zone was expanded further south, it still did not reach the extent Mare Nostrum had. Furthermore, its operational priority continued to be border control as opposed to saving lives.”⁹¹ In summary, the humanitarianism that Europe wants to see itself offering is contradicted in the actual policies that it implements in the Mediterranean. The transition from Operation Mare Nostrum, which rescued migrants both in the waters that are close to Italy and Libya, to Operation Triton, which rescues migrants only close to the Italian coast, resulted in more deaths. Rather than awareness campaigns and

⁸⁹ Pezzani and Heller, “Death by Rescue.”

⁹⁰ Pezzani and Heller, “Death by Rescue.”

⁹¹ Pezzani and Heller, “Death by Rescue.”

artistic performances, what is necessary is a change in policy towards a practice, rather than an appearance, that is more humanitarian.

3.2 Renewed threat: from the migrant to the smuggler

What is visible in the coverage is that throughout 2014, the smuggler is increasingly pointed as the source of the “humanitarian emergency” in the Mediterranean. The attention to the smuggler happens as the humanitarian discourse intensifies, evolving and being articulated side-by-side with the threat discourse that frames the migrant. Although the coverage that followed the accident in October 2013 already contained traces of humanitarianism, the coverage that followed the accidents in September 2014 and April 2015 is markedly more reflective of the valor, morality and honor associated with the humanitarian discourse. This second section of the coverage includes more images of migrants being helped; of the usual targets of humanitarianism (children, women and families); of close and more humane portraits of migrants; and of migrants showing signs of emotion, including sadness and happiness. During this period, it is also possible to notice intensification in the demand for European “humanity.” These are some titles that indicate that: “If Europe becomes a fortress against migrants, it fails humanity,” “Europe must honor its migrant dead” and “Let migrants drown? Have we lost our sense of common humanity?”

As indicated above, the attention to the smuggler is visible both in the images and the texts. To begin with the texts, the first mention of smuggling in a title comes in August 2014, with “Libya’s most successful smuggler: ‘I provide a service’” Below, in the subtitle, smuggling is mixed with trafficking: “Human trafficking has gone from a niche business to a huge – and hugely profitable – industry since Gaddafi’s fall.” After the major accident in 2014, where a boat was attacked by “people traffickers” and “deliberately drowned,” this

attention increased so much that the accident was briefly renamed “Mediterranean people-smuggling disaster.” Following from that increase, titles included: “Anger over migrant-smugglers: ‘we won’t surrender to these vampires,’” “Traffickers turn to teenagers to drive migrant boats” and “Italian police arrests Eritrean gang who smuggler migrants.”

The events were already called “tragedy,” the journey was already called “perilous” and the migrants were already called “innocents” in 2013, but this solidarity intensifies and goes from being present in a small section of the coverage to being the major frame of the coverage in 2014 and 2015. While the titles were more direct in the early coverage, including “Scores of migrants die as boat sinks off Lampedusa,” “Italy to hold state funeral for drowned migrants” and “Lampedusa rescuers describe struggle to save drowning migrants,” they get markedly more dramatic later in the coverage, taking the side of the migrant throughout 2014 and very strongly in 2015. Titles include “Give drowned migrants the dignity of a name,” “On board the tiny fleet saving terrified migrants from an angry Mediterranean,” “Risking death in the Mediterranean: the least bad option for so many migrants” and “An extraordinary escape: survivors of migrant boat disasters tell their stories.”

While the articles focus on the smuggler earlier, in 2014, the first portraits are published only in 2015. Out of the seven photographs, the first, which is repeated three times, shows two mug shots, of a captain and a crewmember. They were arrested after the boat that they were leading sank, killing more than 700 people. Both were taken to Catania, where one of them was prosecuted for murder. The second photograph, published days later, shows the captain behind bars in court. The third photograph is one of the few out of the whole period that was captured in Libyan soil, taken in Ghat. It shows the smuggler, face covered, talking to a group of migrants, who hold backpacks and handbags. He seems to be instructing them on the journey ahead. The fourth and fifth images are curious. They show the same group of migrants, lying down as they wait for something on the deck of an Italian coastguard ship.

Days later, an image from the same set is published again, but now one of the men, mixed with the migrants, is identified as smuggler. These photographs clearly construct the smuggler as threat: they are shown in mug shots, behind bars and with faces covered. The way their facial expressions and body postures are depicted make them look lazy, mischievous and evil, ready to explore the migrants. This reinforces the idea proposed in this research that while the migrants were increasingly less framed as threats and increasingly more framed as victims, the smuggler took their place.

But smuggling is a much more complex subject than the simplification offered by the discourses that surrounds the Mediterranean. According to Kyle and Dale, global human smuggling is usually defined according to two simplifications: “globalization has created the conditions for greater transnational crime of all sorts, of which trafficking in humans is the most recent illicit global activity” or “some very ruthless and greedy professional criminals are exploiting the weak and mostly innocent migrants who are either duped or coerced into a clandestine journey.”⁹² Kyle and Dale also question the prominence of the smuggler in discussions of illegal migration and how one tends to ignore the other actors involved in the movements. “A narrow focus on the criminal smuggler overlooks a range of people implicated and benefiting from the politics and business of human smuggling.” They point to the ignored actors: “states pursuing their official interests and corrupt state officials pursuing self-aggrandizement,” “regional elites” and “employers at the destinations.”⁹³

The simplification with which migration is presented in the coverage does not respect the nuances involved in a practice so varied and complex as human smuggling. To question those simplifications and to show the complexity that smuggling actually offers

⁹² David Kyle and John Dale, “Smuggling the State Back In: Agents of Human Smuggling Reconsidered.” In David Kyle and Rey Koslowski, eds., *Global Human Smuggling: Comparative Perspectives*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 29-30.

⁹³ Kyle and Dale, “Smuggling the State Back In,” 48.

when one considers the wide variety of potential relationships between migrant and smuggler, Kyle and Dale contrast two very different kinds of smuggling operations. The first scenario is composed of Equatorial migrants who hire smugglers to travel to the United States, while the second is composed of Burmese women and girls who are trafficked into slavery in Thailand.⁹⁴ The first case is closer to a migrant exporting scheme, with smugglers that “are not members of transnational organized crime in any traditional meaning of the term” and that “are helping family and neighbors.” While the second consists of “state-organized crime,” “entailing the smuggling of an illicit and, to be sure, morally bankrupt commodity.”⁹⁵

To conclude, the encounter between these two discourses, one that wants to see the migrant as threat and one that wants to see the migrant as victim, actually works to produce a number of questions. How can the migrant be seen both as threat and victim? How is it possible for a threat to also be the target of pity? How can one feel fear and compassion for the same person? Out of those contradictions, the smuggler appears to restore the harmony of the discourse: the humanitarian discourse is then used to frame the migrant, while the threat discourse is used to frame the smuggler. In the specific case of the events in the Mediterranean in the period discussed, Europe can continue feeling pity and compassion for the first, because the fear and suspicion are directed to the second.

This need to point to someone as dangerous seems to represent a need for stability in a world where stability is abundantly lacking. According to Huysmans, following from the work of Dillon, this process involves trying to produce fixed knowledge and trying to achieve unequivocal truth in a world of things that are “inherently ambivalent.”⁹⁶ Turning the migrant into a threat “protects a society from the unsettling realization that one cannot unambiguously

⁹⁴ Kyle and Dale, “Smuggling the State Back In,” 29.

⁹⁵ Kyle and Dale, “Smuggling the State Back In,” 48.

⁹⁶ Jef Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity: Fear, Migration and Asylum in the EU* (Routledge, 2006), 54; Michael Dillon, *Politics of Security: Towards a Political Philosophy of Continental Thought* (London; New York: Routledge, 1996).

know whether a particular group of human beings is dangerous or not.”⁹⁷ Meaning that freezing knowledge and reality in one fixed truth protects people from realizing the unfixed, ambiguous and uncertain, therefore threatening, aspect of knowledge and reality.

But what happens when the migrant cannot be said to be dangerous? When the representation of reality is so upsetting that blaming the migrant is not anymore possible? So as not to face the uncertainty of a world without threats, Europe has to direct that threat to another object. A scapegoat must be found. But options are limited. In Africa and Europe, there are the politicians, the population in coastal regions, the members of governmental and border agencies, the volunteers from humanitarian organizations. Blaming dictators and warlords in Africa has not worked in the past, with much of the movement observed today being the result of failed “humanitarian interventions.” Furthermore, blaming the European is not an option, as Europe wants to maintain the agency and the control over those that come from Africa. Therefore, although every group could be constructed as guilty, none fills the role better than the smuggler.

⁹⁷ Huysmans, *The Politics of Insecurity*, 54.

CONCLUSION

This research looked at the photographic coverage of the movements of migrants in the Central Mediterranean route published in the Guardian between June 2013 and June 2015. It investigated the discourses articulated in that coverage and how they clashed to produce an unusual understanding of the events. The photographs were coded according to those who were framed. Three groups were identified: the migrant, the European and the smuggler. Special attention was given to how they are presented and how they relate to each other in the photographs. Although the first two are visible throughout the coverage, the smuggler only appears and gains significance mid-way.

Many strategies to frame the migrant as threat and as victim were identified. Strategies to frame the migrant as threat include depictions of the migrant through effects and with elements that invoke insecurity; showing security officials in their workplace as they manage the “migration crisis;” and blurring or hiding the migrants’ facial features and presenting them as large groups in order to dehumanize and enhance a threatening aspect. In strategies to frame the migrant as victim, the European gains prominence, as they are portrayed in the role of subject and agent, while the migrant is portrayed as object and as someone who lacks agency. Migrants are often shown being helped, saved and handled, while Europeans are often presented in the position of helper, rescuer and provider.

Because of the way the events were presented to the European in the specific place and period investigated here, while the migrant is usually framed as threat, migrants were increasingly looked at through the lenses of humanitarianism. Meaning that towards the end of the coverage, the second set of strategies described above overcame the first. Then, suddenly incapable of problematizing migration as serious as it commonly does, the European found in the smuggler a way to circumvent humanitarianism and to continue seeing migration

as a reason for concern, as something to be stopped and as a crisis to be fixed. This can be seen both in the images, when portraits of the smuggler start to appear and strategies that frame the migrant through humanitarianism start to increase, and in the pieces of text that surround the images, as the smuggler is increasingly vilified and placed in the position of threat, while the opposite happens to the migrant, who is increasingly framed as victim.

In summary, this research proposes that while migration is usually understood as a reason for concern in Europe, the migrant could not be placed in the position of threat in the specific place and period analyzed, because the events in the Mediterranean between 2013 and 2015 were framed as a “humanitarian emergency” and the response had therefore to be “humanitarian.” This happened because Europe saw in the events the images that it learned, for almost two hundred years, since the invention of humanitarianism, to associate with feelings of compassion, responsibility and charity. This encounter between the threat discourse and the humanitarian discourse set up a process of finding a new scapegoat for the situation in the Mediterranean, someone that could embody the supposed threat that migration presents to Europe. This means that in order to circumvent the humanitarian barrier and continue framing migration as problem, Europe had to search for a new scapegoat. And it did find it in the figure of the smuggler.

There are many limitations to this research. First, it covers only one newspaper in one European country. Although other newspapers were consulted and the vilification of the smuggler also happened, this was not done thoroughly enough to claim that this is a widespread practice. It would be interesting to see how this phenomenon repeats itself in other publications, especially from other regions in Europe and those closer to the Mediterranean, including in Spain, Italy and Greece.

Second, following the period of investigation, starting from mid-2015, media attention shifted from the Central Mediterranean route to the Eastern Mediterranean route, where migrants were making the cross between Turkey and Greece. One potential for further research involves the investigation of how the mechanisms that were set into motion during the events investigated here continued to inspire the media coverage and the general discussion that ensued, if they did. For now, the magnitude and closeness of those events, which were more discussed than the events in the Central Mediterranean route, make any generalization difficult.

Third, discourses are interesting when considered in relation to the policies they make possible. This is especially relevant in the case discussed here, as policies are directly related to the well-being of the migrants making the cross. As it was described, a change in the operations articulated in the Mediterranean resulted in a serious increase in the number of deaths in the region. Chances of dying multiplied 30 times as the operations changed from Italy's Mare Nostrum, which covered a larger territory and had more ships and helicopters, to Frontex's Triton, that stayed closer to European borders and had fewer assets.

Since the events described here, the movement of migrants went east, but now it starts to return to the piece of water between Libya and Italy. As this research is finished, similar photographs to the ones shown below are published in the media. As this research discussed, this movement and the ensuing deaths are far from unprecedented, they come from the strengthening of border and visa policies that migrants coming from Africa saw installed between the 1980s and 1990s. While Europe understands the movements in the Mediterranean as a limited event, as a "crisis" that must be "solved" so normalcy can be restored, or until it stops to find scapegoats for a problem for which it has a large share of guilt, Europe will fail to save the lives that are being lost in the waters of the Mediterranean.

APPENDIX



October 12, 2013 – 13h56



A migrant child looks out of a police bus in Valletta, Malta, after being rescued from the sea off the Italian island of Lampedusa. Photograph: Darrin Zammit Lupi/Reuters

October 12, 2013 – 17h31



An Italian police vehicle takes migrants who survived recent ship sinking after their arrival at Catania. Photograph: Alessandro Di Meo/EPA

April 21, 2015 – 13h56



Migrants from other parts of African are held at a detention centre in Zawiya, northern Libya. Photograph: Ahmed Jadallah/Reuters

August 1, 2014 – 17h20



A picture of the migrant boat taken before it lost power and began to drift. Only nine of the passengers survived after it drifted for two weeks in a busy shipping lane

June 18, 2013 – 19h32



The stranded vessel off Cyprus's coast. Photograph: AP

September 25, 2014 – 18h06



📷 An infra-red screengrab provided by the Italian coastguard during the operation to rescue the migrants.
Photograph: Guardia di Finanza/EPA

April 20, 2015 – 7h21



📷 A picture released by the Italian navy showing rescue operations in the Mediterranean on Christmas Eve.
Photograph: Italian navy press office/EPA

December 26, 2014 – 15h42



📷 A boat full of migrants arrives at the Italian island of Lampedusa in the Mediterranean in April 2011. Photograph: Ettore Ferrari/EPA

October 3, 2013 – 15h35



📷 Migrants dock at Lampedusa ... 13,000 have arrived there so far this year. Photograph: Antonio Parinello/Reuters

October 16, 2013 – 21h58



📷 A boat carrying migrants off the coast of Libya in April. The country is a common transit route for migrants trying to reach Europe. Photograph: Giuseppe Lami/EPA

June 10, 2014 – 14h51



📷 Migrants stranded on a boat coming from Libya wait for rescue off the Tunisian coast.
Photograph: Hafda/AFP/Getty Images

April 21, 2015 – 9h40



April 17, 2015 – 13h56



April 21, 2015 – 9h40



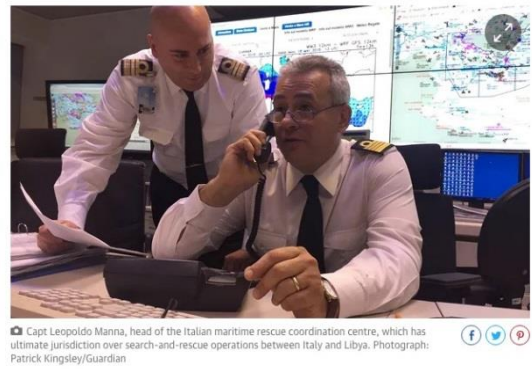
April 23, 2015 – 10h15



May 11, 2015 – 16h34



May 29, 2015 – 21h47



May 19, 2015 – 10h08



A crossing survivor is taken for medical treatment on the Italian island of Lampedusa. "People fleeing from persecution and conflict will find a way to circumvent the system." Photograph: Ettore Ferrari/EPA

June 4, 2014 – 17h



A survivor from a sinking off Greece in May. Most European migrant deaths came in attempts to cross the Mediterranean. Photograph: Orestis Panagiotou/EPA

September 29, 2014 – 13h09



Mohamed Abdallah, a Darfuri refugee, wants to risk crossing the sea to Europe because of wars in both Libya, and his home country. Photograph: Patrick Kingsley for the Guardian

April 17, 2015 – 13h56



A migrant is helped as he disembarks from an Italian coastguard boat in Palermo, Sicily. Southern Europe bears the brunt of illegal migration. Photograph: Reuters

April 21, 2015 – 9h40



There is something very affecting about this scene, showing Italian police photographing migrants with identifying numbers as they arrive with a group including Syrian and Palestinian refugees at Catania harbour, in Sicily. Photograph: Stringer/Reuters

October 8, 2013 – 17h51



African asylum seekers rescued off boats and taken aboard an Italy navy ship. Photograph: Massimo Sestini/eyevine

June 25, 2014 – 17h55



📍 A rescue mission off the coast of Libya, October 2014 Photograph: Darrin Zammit Lupi/REUTERS



October 20, 2014 – 14h45



📍 An Italian military ship arrives in the port of Pozzallo, Sicily, with migrants on board. Photograph: Giovanni Isolano/AFP/Getty Images



November 18, 2014 – 12h16



📍 Local residents and rescue workers assist a migrant woman after a boat she was travelling in sank off the island of Rhodes, Greece. Photograph: Argiris Mantikos/AFP/Getty



📍 Speaking in Brussels, David Cameron discusses Britain's possible contributions ahead of an emergency EU summit on migration

April 20, 2015 – 16h59

April 23, 2015 – 17h26



📍 An airport hangar in Lampedusa contains the bodies of more than 300 migrants who drowned trying to cross the Mediterranean in October 2013. Photograph: Roberto Salomone/EPA



📍 Maltese soldiers hold a coffin during the funeral ceremony of 24 people who died after a boat carrying migrants capsized off the Libyan coast. Photograph: Matthew Mirabelli/AFP/Getty Images

June 2, 2014 – 17h15

April 24, 2015 – 12h51



Italian fishermen and boat crews throw a wreath in memory of victims of the migrant boat sinking off the coast of Lampedusa. Photograph: Tullio Puglia/Getty Images

October 5, 2013 – 13h23



Vigil to commemorate migrants who died at sea in Sliema, outside Valletta. Photograph: Darrin Zammit Lupi/Reuters

April 23, 2015 – 15h43



Mediterranean boat disaster: key developments - video

April 24, 2015 – 15h37



Mohammed Ali Malek in court in Catania, Sicily. Photograph: Antonio Parrinello/Reuters

April 21, 2015 – 13h56



A Libyan smuggler (with covered face) talks to African migrants at a house in Ghat, south-west Libya. Photograph: Ahmed Jadallah/Reuters

April 24, 2015 – 15h22



Migrants picked up at sea lie on the deck of an Italian coastguard ship. Photograph: Darrin Zammit Lupi/Reuters

April 20, 2015 – 19h57

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