

**BETWEEN ALIGNMENT AND CONTESTATION:
THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF HOW DEVELOPMENT NGOS
APPROPRIATE THE EUTF'S MIGRATION-
DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

By

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Abstract

This thesis discusses how German development NGOs align with and contest the European Union Trust Fund's hegemonic migration-development agenda in their own narratives and projects. It thereby contributes to the growing literature on de-centring migration and externalization studies, investigating the under-researched role of non-state actors. Using thematic analysis, this thesis works out forms and degrees of validity and applicatory contestation and investigates how NGOs translate these narratives into respective projects. It finds that the form of contestation (or alignment) varies between different NGOs and different themes, both in narratives and projects. And even if engaging in similar contestation forms, the respective contestation degree can vary, as NGOs engage differently with EUTF's (post)colonial underpinnings - which is also visible in corresponding projects. This thesis therefore shows that contestation is a multifaceted and nuanced process and that NGO's appropriation of the EUTF forms a spectrum.

Author's Declaration

I, the undersigned, Maren Krude, candidate for the MA degree in International Relations, declare herewith that the present thesis titled “Between Alignment and Contestation: Thematic Analysis of how Development NGOs Appropriate the EUTF’s Migration-Development Agenda” is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person’s or institution’s copyright.

I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Vienna, 22 May 2025

Maren Krude

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List of Abbreviations

BfdW	Brot für die Welt – Evangelisch Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V.
EU	European Union
EUTF	European Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa
GEW	Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft
Help	Help – Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe e.V.
IOs	International Organizations
Medico	Medico International e.V.
Misereor	Bischöfliches Hilfswerk Misereor e.V.
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Welthungerhilfe	Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V.

Introduction

In the last ten years, the number of forcibly displaced people has steadily increased and reached a new high in the summer of 2024 (UNHCR 2025). Simultaneously, Global North countries increasingly intensify their measures to manage and contain migration already outside their borders (Frelick, Kysel, and Podkul 2016, 191). The latest example is EU's Pact on Migration and Asylum, adopted in 2024, which aims at internationally managing migration (European Commission 2024).

Migration management describes the “attempt to turn migration into a more orderly, predictable and manageable process” (Geiger and Pécoud 2010, 2). First approaches to internationally manage migration originate back to the 1990s. Increased globalization provoked transnational anxieties concerning terrorism, climate change, as well as growing mobility. As migration intensified, Western countries increasingly perceived it as a threat to their welfare state and identity and increased their cooperation to manage migration internationally (Wihtol de Wenden 2024, 332-333; Pécoud 2021, 207). However, the issue was without high political relevance until 2015 (Wihtol de Wenden 2024, 332-333), when the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ “created a substantial impetus for urgent political interventions in the sphere of migration management” (Vigneswaran et al. 2024, 798). The EU reacted by establishing the *European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa* (hereinafter called: EUTF) (Szent-Ivanyi 2021, 2557).

EUTF's main strategy is to mitigate migration outside the EU territory through development assistance (Berger 2022, 2). This marked the beginning of one of the main current strategies of the European Union's externalization agenda. Externalization describes “the process through which destination countries promote, support, delegate, impose, or directly carry out activities related to migration and border management outside their territories [...] in order to prevent unwanted arrivals” (Cuttitta 2020, 2). The EUTF remains to-date the “most

ambitious initiative in a long history of EU engagement with migration in Africa” (Boersma et al. 2022, 82) and the “latest and most comprehensive instrument for externalising migration management” (Pacciardi 2025, 65). Its strategic foundation has been replicated in more recent strategies, including the new Pact on Migration and Asylum mentioned above (Pacciardi 2025, 65).

What is to-date rather unexplored, however, is how non-state actors relate to current externalization practices (Zaiotti 2016, 10; Cobarrubias et al. 2023, 2). A growing literature calls for de-centring this analysis, which acknowledges the role of non-state actors (Carmel, Lenner, and Paul 2021, 3; Triandafyllidou 2020, 2, 10; Cobarrubias et al. 2023, 2; Stock, Üstübici, and Schultz 2019, 2).

This thesis examines how (German) development NGOs relate in their narratives and projects to the dominant EUTF agenda. It sheds light on the ambiguous state-NGO relationship, shaped by resource dependency (Stroup 2019) and agency conflicts (Marshall and Staeheli 2015). With the help of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006), and guided by norm contestation theory (Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2013) and post- and decolonial theory (Danewid 2017; Sa’di 2021), it analyses the forms and degrees of NGOs alignment and contestation - answering the following Research Questions: *How are German development NGOs appropriating (both aligning and contesting) the EUTF’s migration-development narrative? And how do melanges of narrative contestation and alignment translate into concrete NGO projects?*

The analysis shows that NGOs’ appropriation is multifaceted: they engage in different forms of contestation, partly aligning and partly contesting EUTF’s themes. Even if NGOs draw on similar arguments, the degree of their contestation varies as they appropriate EUTF’s underpinned coloniality differently – which also reflects in respective projects. Consequently,

NGO's appropriation comprises a spectrum of alignment and contestation, with many in-between engagements.

This thesis proceeds as follows. The first chapter introduces the relevant literature - highlighting how the introduction of the EUTF changed EU development and migration management policies, explaining why a closer examination of development NGOs is necessary and outlining the research gap this thesis aims to address. The theoretical framework in the second chapter unpacks the ambiguous NGO-state relationship, as well as different forms and degrees of norm contestation, which make it possible to explore how NGOs relate to the EUTF agenda. After introducing the methodology and research design of the theoretical thematic analysis in the third chapter, the fourth chapter analyses three themes that are prominently discussed by the EUTF and NGOs. It identifies the varying forms and degrees of NGO alignment and contestation, and how NGO narratives translate into respective projects. After summarizing and discussing the findings in the fifth chapter, the thesis concludes with an outlook on further research opportunities.

1. Literature Review

The introduction of the EUTF did not only represent a major shift in EU's migration governance as mentioned above, but also in its general development approach (Zaun and Nantermoz 2023, 2987). This chapter highlights EUTF's high impact, as well as the importance of investigating the role of development non-state actors in relation to it.

1.1. Development-migration nexus: A brief history

The way development and migration have been linked by researchers and policymakers has gone through several shifts in the last decades. In the 1950s and 1960s, policymakers focused on the potentials of migration for development (Bastia 2018, 315) and argued, “that migration would reallocate production factors and thereby help modernize newly decolonized countries” (Kabbanji 2021, 75). In the 1970s and 1980s, a tremendous shift led to the assumption that migration itself might be causing ‘under-development’, due to the depletion of highly skilled workers in poor countries (Bastia 2018, 315; Kabbanji 2021, 75). In the 1990s, a neoliberal understanding of migration and development started to dominate (Kabbanji 2021, 76-77). The transnational circulation of highly skilled migrants was perceived positively again, as their remittances enhance development, while simultaneously filling labour gaps in Europe. This understanding emerged together with the above-described idea of a well-managed migration regime, which facilitates the mobility of specific categories of migrants, while restricting others (Bastia 2018, 315; Kabbanji 2021, 75, 77-78; Geiger and Pécoud 2013, 369). In this period also the ‘root causes’ narrative first emerged, which the EUTF built upon (Vigneswaran et al. 2024, 799).

While connections between development and migration governance had been made before 2015, the EUTF is considered to be the first example of the contemporary strategy to use development assistance directly in the interest of the EU's migration management (Castillejo 2016, 27). Whereas EU development agendas were until then directed towards

reducing poverty, enhancing sustainable development (Zaun and Nantermoz 2023, 2987) and, in connection to migration, “maximising the development impact of migration and mobility” (European Commission 2011, 18) - with the introduction of the EUTF, those elements “are no longer end goals in themselves but rather means to a broader objective: reducing migration flows towards Europe” (Zaun and Nantermoz 2023, 2987). The EUTF achieved this by consciously linking its migration governance agenda to development goals (Vigneswaran et al. 2024, 795). This narrative helped to “bridge gaps between pro-development actors on one hand and pro-migration-control actors on the other hand” (Vigneswaran et al. 2024, 795). The next section elaborates how the strategic creation of narratives – in this case by connecting development and migration management - follows a general logic in the international migration management regime.

1.2. The role of narratives

Narratives play an important role in policy-making processes, as they are being used to legitimize political strategies (Pacciardi 2025, 66; Pécoud 2021, 214). This is especially true in the context of migration management (Dennison 2021, 1). Pécoud (2021, 209) shows, that: “migration management is primarily about elaborating a fairly coherent political narrative about migration. [...] [I]t describes *what migration is* while also normatively outlining what *it should be*”. Critical scholars show how Global North states seek to employ a neutral stance in connection to migration management, aimed at depoliticizing political contestations. Already the concept of “‘Management’ conveys the idea that migration can be governed in an optimal way, which has nothing to do with ideology or power” (Pécoud 2021, 213). Framing migration management as apolitical and technocratic, presents it not as a political choice, but as an effective and necessary step to address migration (Cuttitta 2018, 635). This strategy aims at legitimizing migration governance, and “making it appear far more coherent than what it is” (Facon 2023, 713).

By connecting migration management with development goals, the EUTF follows this strategy. It directly links the state of emergency at its borders to development policies in Africa, and frames ‘under-development’ as the main reason for irregular migration (Vigneswaran u. a. 2024, 799; Boersma et al. 2022, 82). By adopting this narrative, “it has become almost self-evident truth that in order to decrease migration toward Europe, the “root-causes” of migration need to be addressed” (Vigneswaran et al. 2024, 795). The goal thereby is to make its agenda politically uncontested, framing it as a “technocratic and consensus-building response to increased migration flows” (Zaun and Nantermoz 2023, 2993-2994). Crane (2020, 33) elaborates that “[t]he discursive power of framing management as development is to remove biopolitical judgements from the arena of the political”, so that practices and institutions of development can be easily entangled with those of containment (Crane 2020, 34; Vigneswaran et al. 2024, 792,795).

The agendas and narratives of Western state actors in connection to migration management have been well-researched (Triandafyllidou 2020, 2, 10; Zaiotti 2016, 10). Less attention, however, has been given to how non-state actors interact with these narratives, as the next section shows.

1.3. De-centring migration governance

Scholarship on international migration governance has mainly focused on the agenda and narratives of dominant Western states (Triandafyllidou 2020, 2, 10; Zaiotti 2016, 10). This is mainly due to the fact that migration policies fall under the jurisdiction of the state (Pécoud 2021, 206) and furthermore, the state’s seemingly neutral stance in migration management makes it easy to dismiss the interest of other stakeholders (Triandafyllidou 2020, 2-3). Nevertheless, the role of other actors should not be neglected. With growing externalization of migration management, more actors have been increasingly entangled in its governance (Martins and Strange 2019, 197). This is also true for the migration-development field, which

transformed into an “industry with a complex web of multiple actors” (Bastia 2018, 316). As development aid has become an integral part of EU’s migration control strategy, also the importance of IOs and NGOs increased “due to their capacity to operate transnationally and implement development and humanitarian projects on the ‘management’ and ‘prevention’ of migration along migration routes” (Gazzotti 2021, 5).

Consequently, there is a growing call in the literature to de-centre the analysis of (externalized) migration governance and acknowledge the role of diverse actors (Carmel, Lenner, and Paul 2021, 3; Triandafyllidou 2020, 2, 10; Cobarrubias et al. 2023, 2; Stock, Üstübeci, and Schultz 2019, 2). This is especially important concerning the framing of narratives in migration management. Diverse actors are reproducing and legitimizing dominant narratives; however, they are also applying their own arguments, which often contest and contradict each other (Carmel, Lenner, and Paul 2021, 3; Kabbanji 2021, 78-79; Geiger and Pécoud 2010, 4). Triandafyllidou (2020, 13) argues that a de-centred approach to study migration governance, “has an important role in changing the way in which we think and talk about migration by incorporating alternative views of a plurality of actors”.

Following this call, this thesis focuses on the role and narratives of development NGOs. There are two key reasons for this focus. First, development NGOs are a crucial part of the foreign development sector. Especially since the 1970s, their unique role has been praised as a more grassroot-focused form of development and therefore filling important gaps (Banks and Hulme 2012, 2). Second, as the EUTF introduced a fundamental change to the development sector (Zaun and Nantermoz 2023, 2987; Vigneswaran et al. 2024, 812), this had a great effect on all actors involved. The EU in general, and the EUTF in particular, have identified NGOs as crucial actors and invested to co-opt them into their agendas (European Commission 2024, 6; Schrover, Vosters, and Glynn 2019, 189-190). However, as the next section shows, NGO’s ambivalent role in migration management and the EUTF is difficult to untangle.

1.4. Development NGOs in migration management

As the migration management agenda gained importance internationally, also the role and activities of international NGOs expanded (Schrover, Vosters, and Glynn 2019, 208-209). They increasingly engaged in negotiations on migration governance, provided expertise and networks, and drafted advice and treaties (Schrover, Vosters, and Glynn 2019, 195, 212-213). In general, their role is often connected to pro-migrant advocacy, and especially after the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ in 2015, they developed an increasingly critical stance of EU’s deterrence policies (Ataç and Schwenken 2021, 369; Schrover, Vosters, and Glynn 2019, 212-213). However, other scholars highlight how (development) NGOs are also getting increasingly co-opted in externalized migration control. In the case of Tunisia and Egypt (2020, 9) and Libya (2023, 752), Cuttitta shows how NGOs often fill gaps in migration management on behalf of their European donors. Similarly, funding from the EU attracted several local and European NGOs to start working on migration in Morocco (Gazzotti 2021, 79-81). However, Gazzotti (2021, 10-11) also highlights how NGOs follow their own strategies in line with their institutional survival or political missions, which are at times even in contrast to the agendas of donors.

In their engagement with narratives on migration governance, the role of NGOs seems similarly ambivalent. Boswell et al. (2021, 15) show how NGOs tend to reproduce certain narratives, such as the “rescue frame”, in which they - similarly to the EU - portray themselves as saviours of vulnerable migrant groups. In contrast, Ihlen et al. (2015, 823) analyse how NGOs are engaging in “framing contests” in the media over migration governance with states. Also, Geiger and Pécoud (2010, 8) elaborate on the ambivalent role of NGOs, as they are often shaped by powerful IOs, while also creating own “spaces of negotiations and confrontations in the definition and interpretations of ‘migration management’ objectives”.

Zooming in on the engagement of development NGOs with the EUTF, their role is again ambivalent. In general, since the EUTF's establishment, NGOs have been rather critical in their advocacy (Vigneswaran et al. 2024, 794). The coordination platform for European development NGOs CONCORD criticized the EUTF for diverting development assistance to fit European migration goals and highlighted human rights violations (McKeon 2018, 871, 876). However, research shows how some European development NGOs were critical in their advocacy, but nevertheless engaged in the implementation of some of EUTF's projects (Szent-Ivanyi 2021, 2561-2566). Also Vigneswaran et al. (2024, 802) elaborate how the EUTF opened a new market for NGOs "that could transform these economic resources into developmental projects seeking to affect or 'better govern' migration".

But while it is understood that many development NGOs got co-opted directly into EUTF projects, the question remains open how development NGOs relate to EUTF's migration-development agenda in their own projects and narratives. Zaun and Nantermoz (2022, 521) argue that EUTF's depoliticized narrative of addressing 'root causes' with development aimed directly at making the frame more acceptable and adoptable by other development actors, including NGOs. And indeed, Vigneswaran et al. (2024, 812) show how this might have been successful, as they observed, on the example of the firm Altai Consulting, "changes in the nature of the work done by development actors, as they integrate migration rationales into their perspectives and practices". Also, Castillejo (2017, 30) analysis in Ethiopia indicates that the EUTF has led to a proliferation of development NGOs to refocus their work towards "a European-driven prioritisation of migration". However, as mentioned before, other scholars highlight that it should not be assumed that NGOs simply reproduce hegemonic agendas and narratives. They argue that NGOs are also opting alternative logics, which do not fall into hegemonic migration management scopes, as "they are still able to accommodate, amend, and counter states' political, economic, and cultural goals" (Doering-White, Crane, and Roth 2024,

4, 8). What is thereby especially missing “is a closer analysis of how such actors disrupt dominant narratives and views of the migration process” (Triantafillou 2020, 10).

This thesis therefore aims to investigate how development NGOs relate to the dominant EUTF’s migration-development agenda in their own narratives. And furthermore - as practices often diverge from narratives that underpin them, but they are the ones making the real difference (Geiger and Pécoud 2010, 2, 10; Gazzotti 2021, 21-22; Cuttitta 2018, 651) – how narratives are being translated into respective projects. This thesis therefore aims to answer to the following Research Question: *How are (German) development NGOs appropriating (both aligning and contesting) the EUTF’s migration-development narrative? And how do melanges of narrative contestation and alignment translate into concrete NGO projects?*

The next chapter outlines the theoretical framework through which this research question will be approached. To explore how development NGOs relate to EUTF’s narratives, it is necessary to unpack what informs the NGO- state relationships, as well as different forms and degrees of norm contestation.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Ambiguous NGO-state relationship

A major determinant of the NGO-state relationship is resource dependency, which is also a major concern for co-optation (Stroup 2019, 38-39). It describes how organization's survival depends on their ability to obtain resources, which in turn constraints their autonomy, as it requires them to adapt their agenda to external funders (Froelich 1999, 247; AbouAssi and Tschirhart 2018, 127). For most NGOs the largest part of funding comes from national governments (Werker and Faisal 2008, 78). This puts NGOs in the dilemma between external accountability and internal dedication to their own missions and moral motivations (Amagoh 2015, 223). Critical voices argue that NGO's agendas get inevitably distorted, as "NGO accountability gets shifted 'upwards' (to donors) rather than 'downwards' to the grassroots" (Amagoh 2015, 223). They argue, that NGOs end up implementing state strategies, instead of improving the conditions of their beneficiaries (Brass et al. 2018, 138; Ohanyan 2012, 371; Stroup 2019, 35).

Contrasting views, however, highlight that NGOs cannot simply be co-opted, since they hold authority which gives them autonomy and agency (Stroup and Wong 2016, 142; Schrover, Vosters, and Glynn 2019, 7). Authority is constructed and legitimised through social relations and actors draw on it to make their voice recognized by others (Barnett and Finnemore 2004, 20, 25). NGOs can usually claim three types of authority: moral, expert and logistical (Schrover, Vosters, and Glynn 2019, 7). Organizations claim moral authority by positioning themselves as "representative of the community's interests or the defender of the values" (Barnett and Finnemore 2004, 23). NGOs therefore refer to their particular agenda of being subordinated to the protection of the most vulnerable and following altruistic incentives, in which they "sacrifice themselves to champion the interests of the poor" (Szent-Ivanyi 2021, 2554). This unique characteristic assigns them more positive reputation than states - and legitimizes their

moral authority (Stroup and Wong 2016, 140-141; Cho 2024, 6). Furthermore, development NGOs can draw on expert and logistical authority due to their unique transnational character of being connected to actors in both donor and recipient countries (Cho 2024, 2, 3, 6). With their exclusive access to specific communities and information-rich networks, they can draw on specialized expertise, which puts them in good bargaining positions (Stroup and Wong 2016, 141; Cho 2024, 5-6). NGOs being unique transnational intermediaries – as they can effectively build unique bridges between donor states and beneficiaries (Cho 2024, 5) - also gives them logistical authority, described as the ability of effectively providing services and mobilizing people (Schrover, Vosters, and Glynn 2019, 7). So, despite their resource dependency, NGOs still exercise agency, which enables them to opt alternative logics that do not fall into migration management scopes that the state intended (Doering-White, Crane, and Roth 2024, 8), but instead forces donor governments to recognize NGOs and their demands as relevant (Cho 2024, 2, 6; Stroup 2019, 41).

These two perspectives illustrate that it cannot be assumed that NGOs are either fully co-opted by or completely misaligned from state agendas. Instead, it needs a more nuanced understanding (AbouAssi and Tschirhart 2018, 127; Marshall and Staeheli 2015, 11; Ohanyan 2012, 367-368, 372). A relational network perspective highlights the complex relationships and interactions between the state and NGOs (Müller and Schurr 2016, 217; Trudeau 2008, 670, 672, 673; Marshall and Staeheli 2015, 3). As actors are connected by structural power hierarchies, a spectrum of relationships emerges (Ohanyan 2012, 372; Guo and Acar 2005, 348; Marshall and Staeheli 2015, 10). NGOs navigate their authority within constraining material, normative and institutional structures, which results in hybrid arrangements, multiple directionalities and agency conflicts (Marshall and Staeheli 2015, 10, 13; Stroup and Wong 2016, 141; Schmitz and Mitchell 2022, 8; Trudeau 2008, 670, 672, 676, 685). This is also true for NGOs in migration management, in which they act in the intersection of “institutional

pressures *and* migrant's needs/goals/desires" (Doering-White, Crane, and Roth 2024, 3) and "engage in simultaneous societal, networked and territorial processes of embedding and disembedding" (Doering-White, Crane, and Roth 2024, 3). Having established that NGOs can have agency despite their resource dependency, it requires investigation of what forms of contestation this agency enables.

2.2. (Re-)politization and Norm contestation

As described, EUTF's strategy of connecting development aid with migration management aims at depoliticization (Zaun and Nantermoz 2023, 2993-2994), which describes the strategy of "remov[ing] the political character of decision-making" (Burnham 2001, 128) and presenting migration management and corresponding policies as neutral, apolitical and necessary (Cuttitta 2018, 634-635). To assess how development NGOs align or contest the EUTF, it therefore requires a better understanding of what it means to re-politicise these dominant narratives – described as the (re-)introduction of an issue into the political arena (Zürn 2014, 50) - which is to-date still under researched (Triandafyllidou 2020, 10; Facon 2023, 713). As contesting dominant norms serves as a possible mechanism for (re-)politicisation, insights into the norm contestation literature can explore what forms contesting and potentially (re-)politicising agency can take (Hackenesch, Bergmann, and Orbie 2021, 6-7; Zürn 2014, 50; Saltnes and Thiel 2021, 110, 111; de Wilde 2011, 561).

Norm contestation describes "a social activity that involves discursive and critical engagement with norms of governance, whether voiced or voiceless" (Wiener 2014, 2). It is not a straightforward process, but can address different levels and cover a range of practices, depending also on the context it is embedded in (Wiener 2014, 2). For long, the focus in the literature has been on how actors as entrepreneurs place norms on the political agenda (Stroup 2019, 40; Palmiano Federer 2024, 27). NGOs as norm entrepreneurs can exercise agency – enabled through their above mentioned authorities (Schrover, Vosters, and Glynn 2019, 7) – to

set agendas, build networks and employ practices of persuasion to contest existing norm frameworks (Price 2003, 583-584; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 899). However, as described, unevenly distributed power resources puts NGOs in an inferior position in relation to states, limiting their contesting agency (Sandholtz 2008, 103; Venzke 2009, 181; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 900).

A growing scholarship therefore investigates the agency of actors whom norms are being pushed on (as here through the implementation of the EUTF) and discusses acts of resistance in asymmetrical power dynamics with limited space for contestation (Palmiano Federer 2024, 29-30; Lantis and Wunderlich 2018, 573; Zimmermann, Deitelhoff, and Lesch 2017, 696-697). Being norm takers and diffusers offers NGOs specific coping mechanisms, which strengthen their contesting agency (Schneiker and Dany 2018, 47; Linsenmaier, Schmidt, and Spandler 2021, 524). This is possible due to inherent norm polysemy, described as “the parallel existence of diverging meanings of interpretations of norms” (Linsenmaier, Schmidt, and Spandler 2021, 509). The diversity of contexts, in which norms are embedded, as well as different possibilities of language interpretations (norm ambiguity), open space for co-existing norm interpretations (norm polysemy) (Linsenmaier, Schmidt, and Spandler 2021, 509-510, 514). This semantic ambiguity and polysemy is an important source for agency and contestation (Venzke 2009, 159-160; Linsenmaier, Schmidt, and Spandler 2021, 515-516). It opens the space for negotiation and appropriation in the translation process, in which norms are not simply copied from the original, but re-interpreted into something that norm-setters might not have intended (Zimmermann, Deitelhoff, and Lesch 2017, 696; Großklaus 2015, 1255). In this process, NGOs can again draw on their expertise, unique network and moral authority to counter the material superiority of states (Linsenmaier, Schmidt, and Spandler 2021, 524; Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery 2009, 570) and therefore translate, interpret and spin a norm according to their own (ideological) agendas and respective contexts they are embedded

in (Schneiker and Dany 2018, 45-46; Linsenmaier, Schmidt, and Spandler 2021, 514-516, 524; Hafner-Burton, Kahler, and Montgomery 2009, 570). As ambiguity and polysemy is inherent to all norms, also the forms and grounds for contestation depend on how NGOs and their agenda are positioned in relation to norm-setters (Linsenmaier, Schmidt, and Spandler 2021, 512-514, 516, 525; Schneiker and Dany 2018, 54; Wiener 2017, 114).

However, contestation does not necessarily have to have disruptive qualities, as “diverging norm interpretations *per se* do not induce conflict” (Niemann and Schillinger 2017, 46). In fact, as contestation is inherent to norm diffusion, ambiguity can even enable instead of disrupt the creation of meaning (Wiener 2014, 1). If NGOs contribute to depoliticization processes, however, depends “on whether their work reproduces or challenges the existing framework”(Cuttitta 2018, 636). Consequently, for truly challenging the stability of dominant norms, the *type* of contestation matters (Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2013, 1, 4).

One can distinguish between *validity* and *applicatory* contestation as “two pathways through which contestation contributes to politicization” (Saltnes and Thiel 2021, 111). Both are forms of interpretative contestation, in which actors – enabled with appropriation through inherent polysemy and ambiguity - consciously or unknowingly apply different interpretations (Orchard and Wiener 2023, 54-55). Applicatory contestation questions the appropriateness and implications of a norm for a specific context, often by drawing on disputes about its correct interpretation and application (Zimmermann, Deitelhoff, and Lesch 2017, 700; Lantis and Wunderlich 2018, 573; Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2013, 5). In contrast, validity contestation is more fundamental, questioning the very core of a norm and applying “normativity-generating” strategies through “the formulation and visualisation of alternatives” (Zimmermann, Deitelhoff, and Lesch 2017, 702). Whereas applicatory contestation has the potential of gradually changing normativity, it can also stabilize established norm’s legitimacy, by “ascribing meaning to norms and thereby revitalising their validity by and for its addressees”

(Zimmermann, Deitelhoff, and Lesch 2017, 700). If the validity of a norm is questioned, however, it struggles to uphold its obligatory demands, which eventually leads to norm decay (Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2013, 1, 5). This form of contestation therefore resonates stronger with the repoliticisation agenda, talking about “disrupt[ing] the continuation of power politics” (Facon 2023, 714).

2.3. Degrees of contestation

Beyond the binary distinction of applicatory and validity contestation, scholars have shown that contestation and repoliticisation can vary in degree and depth (Müller and Wunderlich 2018, 359; Wiener 2017, 119-120). For assessing those degrees, a second layer focuses on how NGOs interact with EUTF’s specific underpinnings.

Critical scholars highlight that talking about European politics needs to shed light on (post)colonial underpinnings, informing European reality until today (Kinnvall 2016, 153). Especially, “[i]t is not possible to seriously consider the topics of migration [...] without including colonial histories” (Mayblin 2021, 25). Europe must be understood as a project, manifested “through historical processes of colonization and continued through to current processes of globalization” (Kinnvall 2016, 154), which also shapes its contemporary engagement with security and migration (Kinnvall 2016, 153). Regarding the EUTF, Europe’s coloniality becomes especially visible in two concepts, as highlighted in the literature review.

First, as elaborated, the EUTF depoliticizes its agenda (Zaun and Nantermoz 2022, 2994), by naturalizing the geopolitical context of migration (Cuttitta 2018, 635). This resonates with the concept of ‘innocence’, understood as seeing “no relation between current social advantages and the long history of structural violence” (Danewid 2017, 1681), and therefore reproducing Europe’s colonial project (Danewid 2017, 1680). With this stance, the EUTF redirects development aid to serve its own interests, for example, by presenting migration

management as supposedly mutually beneficial, while disregarding structural inequalities and power imbalances (Castillejo 2016, 27; Pécoud 2021, 214).

Europe's 'innocence' stance also flows into the second concept. Scholars criticize how the EUTF presents its agenda as neutral, while actually using development to achieve its main objective: "reducing migration flows towards Europe" (Zaun and Nantermoz 2023, 2987). It thereby clearly follows a neo-orientalist agenda, which aims at building a "fortress Europe" (Sa'di 2021, 2513) to prevent migrants from coming. The goal thereby is to protect European wealth, accumulated during colonialism, as well as protection against "the uncontrollable flux of dark-skinned immigrants" (Sa'di 2021, 2513).

Looking at how these concepts play out in the EUTF and especially how and what arguments NGOs (critically) engage with, maps the degrees of alignment or contestation within the applicatory and validity contestation categories, especially as "inquiry, informed by post- and de-colonial theory, can [...] help re-politicise migration policies" (Cobarrubias et al. 2023, 2).

The next section discusses the methodological approach of the analysis. With the help of theoretical latent thematic analysis, EUTF and NGO narratives and projects will be examined, aimed at "the identification of a (hopefully) saturated set of themes" (Neuendorf 2019, 212).

3. Methodology and Research Design

3.1. Theoretical thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method (Braun and Clarke 2006, 77). It identifies patterns across thematic codes and cases, which facilitates to analyse how the EUTF and NGOs relate (Shukla, Wilson, and Boddy 2014, 3; Virginia Braun and Clarke 2006, 97; Mortelmans 2025, 90). Goal is to analyse what themes the EUTF uses to connect development and migration to justify its agenda and - after having this mechanism established – how development NGOs relate to these EUTF themes.

Braun and Clarke (2006, 87) have developed a six-step process of thematic analysis, which this analysis follows: (1) "Familiarizing yourself with your data"; (2) "Generating initial codes"; (3) "Searching for themes"; (4) "Reviewing themes"; (5) "Defining and naming themes"; (6) "Producing the report". Focus is on systematically generating codes and themes from the data set (Braun and Clarke 2006, 83; 2017, 297). Coding is thereby the main strategy, in which the data is segmented and then reconstructed in a consistent manner (McAllum et al. 2019, 361; Mortelmans 2025, 57-61). This analysis will conduct a *theoretical* thematic analysis, which gives codes only to data can meaningfully answer the research question (Byrne 2022, 1397; Virginia Braun and Clarke 2006, 84; Maguire and Delahunt 2017, 3354). The priorly investigated literature serves thereby as a lens to decide what and how information needs to be coded (McAllum et al. 2019, 2; Mortelmans 2025, 3; Byrne 2022, 1396), but it does not "provide a predetermined structure to code the data" (Braun and Clarke 2022, 19). Consequently, this analysis follows an open coding strategy, guided by the research question(s) (Maguire and Delahunt 2017, 3354). After the coding process, the researcher builds relationships between codes to build themes - again in meaningful relation to the research question(s) (Byrne 2022, 1403; Braun and Clarke 2006, 89-92). In the final step, the existing

theoretical framework serves again as a lens for interpretation (Braun and Clarke 2006, 92-93; Byrne 2022, 1397).

The theoretical discussion has shown how norm contestation draws on diverging, context-depending interpretation (Schneiker and Dany 2018, 54), making it important to understand the assumptions underpinning NGO and EUTF themes. The analysis therefore follows a ‘latent’ approach of theme building, which does not only describe the semantic content of data, but also “identif[ies] hidden meanings or underlying assumptions” (Byrne 2022, 1397). This follows a constructivist epistemology, with a critical orientation. Constructivist epistemology assumes that “meaning and experience are socially produced and reproduced” (Braun and Clarke 2006, 85) and a critical orientation “examine[s] the mechanisms that inform the construction of systems of meaning” (Byrne 2022, 1396). This approach “appreciates meaningfulness as the central criteria in the coding process” (Byrne 2022, 1395), while recurrence of information is secondary (Braun and Clarke 2006, 82; Byrne 2022, 1395).

The analysis is carried out with the Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis software program NVivo, which facilitates data management and coding (Mortelmans 2025, 11-12, 19-20, 22-23).

3.2. Research Design

The analysis starts with the EUTF. Derived from the literature and theoretical review, it is guided by the question: *Based on what assumptions does the EUTF make sense of connecting development to migration to justify its migration management agenda?*

Subsequently, the narratives of the development NGOs will be investigated, guided by the question derived from the theoretical review: *Based on what assumptions do NGOs make sense of connecting development to migration – and how do these themes- in terms of contestation- relate to EUTF themes?*

Third, the analysis zooms in on how NGO melanges of narratives are translated into respective projects - and how those relate to key EUTF themes. This analysis follows the question: *How does narrative contestation and alignment translate into concrete projects and how do those relate – in terms of contestation - to key themes of the EUTF?*

3.3. Case selection

The selection of development NGOs followed a wide definition: “any nonprofit, non-governmental organization that works in the development [...] sector in any country considered a developing country” (Brass et al. 2018, 137). It is important that they have a transnational character (source for expert/logistical/moral authority), with a significant part of their resources coming from state funding (resource dependency). These criteria apply to most Global North NGOs (Szent-Ivanyi 2021, 2554; Davies 2019, 2; Cho 2024, 3). The analysis focuses on NGOs from one country, as NGOs are usually embedded in particular national contexts and receive their largest funding from one respective national government (Werker and Ahmed 2008, 78). In this case, development NGOs from Germany will be analysed. This is because, firstly, Germany is the biggest state donor to the EUTF (European Union 2025). And secondly, picking my own country of origin seems reasonable, as my positionality is inevitably embedded in the analysis (Braun and Clarke 2022, 18) and it helps to better understand the historical and contemporary circumstances, the analysis is embedded in (Pepinsky 2019, 194).

In summary, the case selection has been made based on these criteria: (1) non-governmental development organization with (2) transnational character; (3) origin and headquarter in Germany; (4) state funding as main income. And lastly, (5) availability of data to ensure “rich, detailed and complex accounts of the topic” (Braun and Clarke 2006, 98). Five organizations have been selected: *Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V.*¹, *Brot für die Welt*-

¹ Hereinafter called Welthungerhilfe, both in text and citation

*Evangelisch Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V.*², *Bischöfliches Hilfswerk Misereor e.V.*³, *Help- Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe e.V.*⁴, and *medico international e.V.*⁵ A detailed description of the individual NGOs can be found in the appendices (Appendix A).

The corpus of analysis includes the EUTF strategy report, as well as NGO websites, position papers, annual reports, project descriptions, etc. The compilation of the NGO data set has been guided by the questions posed above. As many NGO projects can be indirectly linked to addressing root causes, it is important to note that only projects that establish an explicit link to migration were included. The data set consists of documents released after the EUTF implementation in 2015 until today. One exception is medico, which is only analysed from the period of 2015-2021, as after 2022 state funding was not its main income source anymore (medico 2023, 30). A complete list of the data corpus can be found in the appendices (Appendix A). All direct translations were made by me.

3.4. Positionality

Lastly, it is important to make my own positionality in this research transparent (Soedirgo and Glas 2020, 528-529; Thambinathan and Kinsella 2021, 3), especially because latent thematic analysis is an interpretative act (Byrne 2022, 1398; Joffe 2012, 210), in which the researcher's rationales are inevitably embedded (Braun and Clarke 2021, 339). Critical scholars have highlighted that knowledge production, especially in connection to migration, cannot be neutral or impartial (Mayblin 2021, 30; Amelina 2022, 2408). Being a White European female student makes my knowledge production "the product of one intellectual culture or tradition amongst many" (Mayblin 2021, 30). My interpretations and analysis must therefore be understood as historically and socially embedded (Amelina 2022, 2409). Furthermore, my

² Hereinafter called BfdW, both in text and citation

³ Hereinafter called Misereor, both in text and citation

⁴ Hereinafter called Help, both in text and citation

⁵ Hereinafter called medico, both in text and citation

perceptions have been shaped by past engagements in both migration projects and development NGOs. Particularly, it needs to be mentioned that I have ties to one NGO in the analysis: Misereor - with which I have done a volunteer service, an internship and volunteer work.

4. Analysis

This report of the thematic analysis focuses on three themes that are discussed most prominently in the EUTF and NGO documents in relation to the questions posed above. It zooms in on forms and degrees of NGO contestation and alignment, in both their narratives and projects. The corresponding tables with all codes can be found in the appendices (Appendix B).

4.1. Theme 1: development for fighting root causes

The EUTF aims to fight root causes of irregular migration (European Commission 2015, 1) and identifies those as push factors in the Global South, including “instability, poverty and destitution”(European Commission 2015, 23) or “low levels of development” (European Commission 2015, 18). It wants to tackle those issues with development initiatives (European Commission 2015, 5, 11, 23), aimed at “provid[ing] alternative opportunities for communities in the respective regions” (European Commission 2015, 12), increasing peace and stability, resilience- and capacity-building (European Commission 2015, 10, 12, 13), as well as economic growth and development. The goal thereby is to “prevent irregular migration flows” (European Commission 2015, 6). This reflects EUTF’s neo-orientalist agenda, which “portrays migration as an outcome of push factors that exist in the developing world” (Sa’di 2021, 2514), which need to be addressed with (development) missions (Sa’di 2021, 2508) - aimed at preventing migrants “from reaching the West” (Sa’di 2021, 2513-2514). EUTF’s exclusive focus on the Global South thereby ignores its own responsibility and colonial history of root causes, making Europe look like an ‘innocent’ observer (Sa’di 2021, 2514; Danewid 2017, 1680-1681).

Help

Help mostly aligns with this EUTF’s neo-orientalist assessment that people migrate because of lacking perspectives (Help 2024; 2025c), economic crisis and poverty in the Global South (Help 2025d; 2016). Like the EUTF, Help argues that those push factors must be

addressed through development aid (Help 2018, 5) and wants to improve perspectives on the ground (Help 2025e).

However, Help contests EUTF's 'innocence' of locating root causes exclusively in the Global South and instead highlights Global North's responsibility for climate change, which leads to displacement. Addressing root causes therefore also means changing our lifestyle and investing into climate change (Help 2025c). This stance makes Help contest at least parts of this theme's validity, although mostly aligning to it. However, its argument misses repoliticising sharpness, as it reproduces – in migration studies persistent (Cobarrubias et al. 2023, 2) - presentism, neglecting the context's coloniality.

Projects

Help's projects address the living conditions in the Global South (Help 2025a). Like the EUTF, they aim at climate adaptation (Help 2016, 34), reconstruction (Help 2025e), income generation (Help 2025b) or advocating for more development aid (Help 2017, 29). By focusing exclusively on the Global South, Help translates only that part of its narratives into projects, which makes its alignment with EUTF's validity and its 'innocent' neo-orientalist agenda more complete.

Welthungerhilfe

Like Help, Welthungerhilfe aligns with EUTF's neo-orientalist agenda of locating root causes in the Global South and names similar things, like hardship and lack of perspectives (Welthungerhilfe 2025). In contrast to Help, however, Welthungerhilfe highlights further "consequences of the North-South divide for flight and migration movements"⁶ (Welthungerhilfe 2019, 6). It argues, that most crises do not emerge without geopolitical

⁶ „Folgen des Nord-Süd-Gefälles für Flucht und Migrationsbewegungen“

influence (Welthungerhilfe 2025a). It describes how the coloniality of social and economic inequalities contribute to root causes (Welthungerhilfe 2025; 2019, 6) and how unfair economic and trade politics are designed at the expense of the Global South (Dieckmann 2017).

By following post-and decolonial critiques that locate “displacement events in the context of colonialism and racism” (Mayblin 2021, 28), Welthungerhilfe adds a more critical layer to Help’s validity contestation. By urging Germany to make its politics fairer and to align it better with development goals (Dieckmann 2017; Ebach 2022; Welthungerhilfe 2019, 3), it challenges Europe’s colonial ‘innocence’ stance to a stronger degree (Danewid 2017, 1684).

In regards to its own development agenda, however, Welthungerhilfe focuses exclusively on the Global South again (Welthungerhilfe 2025a; 2019, 2) and aligns with EUTF’s neo-orientalist agenda of preventing migration, arguing: “the latest flight and migration flows illustrate that there is an urgent need to give people political and economic perspectives also in their home countries”⁷ (Welthungerhilfe 2018, 48) – making it align with this theme’s validity.

Projects

Welthungerhilfe’s narrative of dedicating development aid exclusively to root causes in the Global South translates into projects (Welthungerhilfe 2017, 27). It addresses agricultural development (Kühnle 2023; Welthungerhilfe 2025b), education and skill-training (Zapf 2020; Kühnle 2023), and analyses if development agendas effectively reduce hunger and poverty (Welthungerhilfe 2018, 28). Its more critical validity contestation of EUTF’s ‘innocence’ stance remains unaddressed, making it practically align with EUTF’s neo-orientalist migration prevention agenda and validity.

⁷ „die jüngsten Flucht- und Migrationsbewegungen machen deutlich, dass dringender Handlungsbedarf besteht, Menschen politische und ökonomische Perspektiven auch in ihren Heimatländern zu eröffnen“

Misereor

Like Help and Welthungerhilfe, Misereor also aligns with this theme's validity. It follows EUTF's neo-orientalist assumptions that push factors, like lack of protection mechanisms (Misereor 2018, 2), socioeconomic crisis (Naceur 2024, 1) or weak state infrastructure (Bröckelmann-Simon 2017) are located in the Global South. However, like Welthungerhilfe, Misereor highlights Global North's responsibility for root causes, such as exploitative trade, economy and security structures – rooting back to colonial times (Misereor et al. 2016, 7; Spiegel 2023; Kuller 2016). By highlighting the colonality of current migration movements, Misereor draws on the same arguments and contests EUTF's 'innocence' agenda and validity to a similar degree as Welthungerhilfe (Mayblin 2021, 28). It criticises: "European glasses [have] blinders attached, which only allow a narrowed gaze at the countries in the South"⁸ (Kuller 2016). Like Welthungerhilfe, it argues that addressing root causes requires transformation of Global North's trade and climate politics (Misereor 2020; 2016, 7; Kuller 2016), for example through laws that improve exploitative structures (Spiegel 2023).

But whereas Welthungerhilfe aligns with EUTF's validity and neo-orientalist agenda of limiting development assistance to preventing migration in the Global South, Misereor demands a transformation of this understanding. It similarly urges to address root causes by giving perspectives, defending human rights and building resilience in the Global South (Misereor 2018, 4; 2024, 9), but the goal thereby is not to prevent migration. Instead, it is about centering development assistance around "the safety and well-being of every individual"⁹ (Kuller 2016). With this argument, Misereor goes beyond Welthungerhilfe and Help, and contests EUTF's neo-orientalist migration prevention. However, its validity contestation misses sharp repoliticising force, since by referring to "abstract humanity our analysis becomes

⁸ „europäischen Brille Scheuklappen angeheftet, die nur den verengten Blick in die Länder des Südens zulassen“

⁹ „die Sicherheit und das Wohlergehen jedes Einzelnen“

disconnected from history”(Mayblin 2021, 29). In fact, this argument is even in danger of “patronising fantasy of the white man’s burden – based on the desire to protect [...] endangered others” (Danewid 2017, 1675), which would reproduce EUTF’s (neo-)orientalist agenda (Sa’di 2021, 2507).

Projects

The missing sharpness of Misereor’s validity contestation translates into alignment with EUTF’s neo-orientalist agenda, as it supports “projects [...] which improve the living conditions of the poor and defend Human Rights. This is simultaneously a fight against displacement”¹⁰ (Misereor 2018, 4). It supports projects in the Global South, aimed at improving living conditions (Misereor 2018, 4), skills training (Frielinghausen 2019; Wipfler 2016), peace reconciliation (Misereor et al. 2023, 17), climate justice (Misereor 2022), and education for children (Misereor 2025c). It only engages somewhat more critically than Welthungerhilfe and Help, by politically highlighting the effect of unfair financial structures (Misereor et al. 2017, 35).

BfdW and medico

As BfdW and medico have published joint papers on the matter, a direct comparison better highlights their diverging nuances.

BfdW resonates with EUTF’s validity and neo-orientalist assumptions – like Help, Welthungerhilfe and Misereor - by connecting the causes of displacement at least partly to the lack of development in the Global South (BfdW 2025a), highlighting lack of development strategies, weak infrastructure and human right abuses (Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V. et al. 2017, 2). Medico, in contrast, contests EUTF’s entire validity and neo-

¹⁰ „Projekte die [...] die Lebenssituation der Armen verbessern und Menschenrechte verteidigen. Das ist gleichzeitig auch Fluchtursachenbekämpfung“

orientalist agenda, which locates root causes in the Global South (Gebauer 2015). It argues: “Whether war and violence, persecution and discrimination, poverty and lack of perspectives, [...], almost always are they connected to the growing global inequality between rich and poor”¹¹ (medico and GEW 2018, 4). Both medico and BfdW argue that unfair exploitative economic, security, climate politics are responsible for destroying living conditions in the Global South and highlight that people move due to global inequalities (BfdW 2017b, 1, 6; medico and GEW 2018, 4,5). They highlight that structures that force people to migrate reach back to colonialism (BfdW, medico and stiftung pro asyl 2017, 9), therefore following similar post- and decolonial critiques to contest EUTF’s validity - and neo-orientalist and ‘innocence’ agenda - as Misereor and Welthungerhilfe (Mayblin 2021, 28). However, in contrast to the other three NGOs – and the EUTF - BfdW and medico consciously connect their development agenda to addressing those structural reasons of poverty and inequality (BfdW, medico, and pro asyl e.V. 2021), arguing that the “the fight against root causes must therefore start in the Global North”¹² (BfdW, medico and stiftung pro asyl 2017, 9). By connecting their development agendas to addressing Europe’s responsibility, their validity contestation disrupts Europe’s ‘innocence’ to a stronger degree (Danewid 2017, 1684). Their strategies, however, diverge.

BfdW aims at reforming politics, making sure they do not follow Global North interests, but include peace efforts and respect human rights (BfdW 2025c), and truly address global inequalities (BfdW 2017b, 5). It partly aligns with the EUTF, agreeing that development aid should also give new perspectives in the Global South (BfdW 2025b). The goal thereby, however, is not to prevent migration – in contrast to Help, Welthungerhilfe and EUTF’s neo-orientalist agenda - but instead to enable a self-determined life, so people can make self-determined migration decisions (BfdW 2017b, 6). Its argument is thereby in line with the

¹¹ „Ob Krieg und Gewalt, Verfolgung und Diskriminierung, Armut und Perspektivlosigkeit, [...] fast immer hängen sie mit der zunehmenden globalen Ungleichheit zwischen reich und arm zusammen“

¹² „Die Bekämpfung von Fluchtursachen muss daher im globalen Norden [...] ansetzen“

decolonial agenda of achieving self-determination, liberation and sovereignty (Achiume and Last 2021, 33). It therefore clearly contests the validity of EUTF's neo-orientalist agenda to a stronger degree than Misereor's depoliticised humanity argument (Danewid 2017, 1675).

In contrast, medico does not locate its development approach in the Global South, but connects it to a global stance (medico and GEW 2018, 28-29). Whereas BfdW aims at transforming current politics, medico goes in strongest contrast to the EUTF and demands a fundamental change of the capitalist world order (Gebauer 2015). It argues that fighting root causes essentially means global redistribution of wealth and giving up own privileges (medico and GEW 2018, 28- 29; Gebauer and Lenz 2016), which requires "alternatives to the dominant profit- and growth-oriented economy"¹³ (Gebauer and Lenz 2016). Goal is to achieve a transnational and solidaric global balance (Lenz 2016b; Gebauer 2015). In the meantime, medico perceives migration as a legitimated survival strategy to the current destructive capitalist globalized world (Gebauer 2015) and argues: "the people who are on the move thereby insist on another aspect of globalization, which is natural for us: freedom of movement"¹⁴ (medico and GEW 2018, 5). It connects its development approach to enabling free movement (Gebauer and Lenz 2016). With this line of argument, medico does not only calls out and fully contests the validity of EUTF's neo-orientalist agenda of preventing migration, but by demanding an entire system change and enabling free movement, it rejects the entire theme most radically of all, following the decolonial demand of "extricat[ing] oneself from the linkages between rationality/ modernity and coloniality" (Quijano 2007, 177) and follows a decolonial migration understanding, which "treats economic migrants as political agents exercising equality rights when they engage in 'decolonial' migration" (Achiume 2019, 1510).

¹³ „Alternativen zur herrschenden profit- und wachstumsorientierten Ökonomie“

¹⁴ „Dabei pochen die Menschen, die sich auf den Weg machen, nur auf einen anderen Aspekt der Globalisierung, der für uns selbstverständlich ist: auf Freizügigkeit“

Projects

BfdW's dual understanding of development translates into its projects. On the one hand, it disrupts EUTF's validity, targeting structural inequalities, by supporting networks that fight structural injustices, such as unlawful land grabbing (Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V. et al. 2016, 2). In its political advocacy, it points out connections between destructive politics and root causes (BfdW 2020, 7, 14), monitors land grabbing and appeals to Germany's responsibility (Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V. et al. 2016, 2, 3). On the other hand, it "contributes to the improvement of living conditions in developing countries and makes an important contribution to fighting causes of displacement"¹⁵ (BfdW 2025b). Those projects include education and peacebuilding (BfdW 2025b; Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V. et al. 2016, 4), resilience-building (BfdW 2020, 15), skill-training (Brot für die Welt 2025b), or supporting small farmer's associations (BfdW 2025d). It also urges Germany to increase development efforts to give people new perspectives (Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V. et al. 2016, 3). Although these projects might follow a decolonial narrative – a self-determined life to make own migration decisions (BfdW 2017b, 6) – they nevertheless resonate with EUTF's neo-orientalist agenda of using development as migration prevention, making BfdW at least partly aligned with EUTF's validity.

Medico, in turn, follows its decolonial narrative of completely delinking from EUTF's neo-orientalist agenda. Its only projects in the Global South address structural inequalities, such as exploitative trade practices, land grabbing and raw material extraction (medico 2016, 16; Maurer 2020). Instead, medico raises public awareness in Germany concerning the structural reasons of migration, with movie showings or public discussions (medico 2016, 15, 24) and educates about global connections and responsibilities (medico 2021, 27). It is therefore the

¹⁵ „tragen [...] zur [...] Verbesserung der Lebensbedingungen in Entwicklungsländern bei und leisten einen wichtigen Beitrag, um Fluchtursachen zu beheben“

only NGO that contests the entire validity also in its projects and therefore repoliticises it the most.

4.2. Theme 2: well-managed migration for development

While addressing the root causes of irregular migration is important in the EUTF, so is enabling circular migration, “fully recognising the benefits of well managed migration and mobility” (European Commission 2015, 1). This model promotes the mobility of highly qualified people (European Commission 2015, 2) to meet “comprehensive labour migration policies and strategies” (European Commission 2015, 13). In contrast to irregular migration, those “mobility regimes can stimulate regional economic development, exchanges of knowledge, skills and entrepreneurship” (European Commission 2015, 13). This is supposed to benefit all (European Commission 2015, 1). The EU benefits, as labour market gaps are met (European Commission 2015, 13, 29). The Global South benefits due to “brain circulation” (European Commission 2015, 29) and development contributions of the diaspora (European Commission 2015, 29). And lastly, migrants benefit, as this model offers legal migration alternatives (European Commission 2015, 26). With this narrative, “innocence prevails in the absence of serious consideration of the global South-North relationship as a foundational spatial and temporal dimension of labour – and especially migrant labour- production” (Smith 2018, 276). As discussed before, scholars criticize how this ‘innocence’ thereby reproduces Europe’s economic dominance (Mayblin 2021, 30; Smith 2018, 276), “enabl[ing] Western states to impose their agenda in an apparently consensual manner” (Pécoud 2021, 214), while in fact shaping migration policies to its own needs (KC and Piper 2024, 403).

Help

Help does not address the topic of well-managed migration in its narratives. In its projects, it seems to uncritically align with EUTF’s ‘innocent’ self-interest of making use of

people's economic potentials in Germany, as it supports economic integration and job placement through language and educational projects (Help 2016, 8).

Welthungerhilfe

Welthungerhilfe aligns that well-managed migration is beneficial for the development of all (Welthungerhilfe 2016, 25) and its agenda promotes well-managed migration for development (Welthungerhilfe 2019, 8). It highlights the benefits for countries of origins, as remittances exceed development aid (Welthungerhilfe 2017, 27), as well as benefits for the German economy (Ebach 2025). It thereby fully aligns with the validity of EUTF's 'innocence' agenda, similarly disregarding post(colonial) global inequalities in which labour migration is embedded (Smith 2018, 276). It is even using EUTF's logic to advocate for an expansion of the current immigration concept, arguing that not only high-skilled migrants can contribute to Global North's economy, - as well as to development in countries of origin - but also refugees (Dieckmann 2017) or other non-highly-qualified people (Welthungerhilfe 2019, 2, 7). Development politics should "expand, to promote the development-contributing potentials of immigration"¹⁶ (Welthungerhilfe 2019, 7). Welthungerhilfe therefore contests EUTF's application by demanding more legal paths for also non highly-qualified migrants (Welthungerhilfe 2019, 2), but mainly reproduces the validity of EUTF's 'innocence' approach. The only a bit more critical stance shows, when highlighting that well-managed migration is the most beneficial, when it is fair and balanced between all parties (Ebach 2025).

Projects

In its projects, Welthungerhilfe does not engage much, but - in line with its and EUTF's 'innocence' narrative – promotes immigration politics that put a focus on the development

¹⁶ „ausweiten, die entwicklungsförderlichen Potenziale von Zuwanderung stärker fördern“

benefits of people coming to Germany, through lectures, panel discussions, interviews etc. (Welthungerhilfe 2016, 25).

BfdW

BfdW aligns with the EUTF – and Welthungerhilfe - that migration can meaningfully contribute to development (Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V. et al. 2017, 2), as a “triple-win constellation”¹⁷ (BfdW 2017a). The ‘brain gain’ argument of circular migration thereby trumps the fear of ‘brain drain’ in the Global South (BfdW 2015). BfdW follows the same strategy as Welthungerhilfe to expand the application of the current well-managed migration framework, emphasizing that the European labour market also requires less qualified people (BfdW 2015) – and therefore reproducing EUTF’s validity and ‘innocent’ self-interest. Unlike Welthungerhilfe, however, BfdW contests EUTF’s application to a stronger degree. It shows how global inequalities effect labour migration and demands more legal pathways, by pointing out the needs and human rights of migrants (BfdW 2015), who are exposed to re-occurring exploitation and abuses on the working place, as they do not have legal documents or because states disregarded migrant workers conventions (BfdW 2025a; 2015). This arguments resonates with a decolonized rights-based approach, which highlights consequences of asymmetrical power relations between migrants and states, leading to exploitation and discrimination (KC and Piper 2024, 404). BfdW therefore adds more critical depth to its applicatory contestation of EUTF’s ‘innocence’ than Welthungerhilfe, although also aligning with its validity.

¹⁷ „triple-win-Konstellation“

Projects

BfdW's alignment with the theme's validity translates into its projects. It gives educational stipends to people from the Global South to Germany, aimed at fostering development for respective communities (BfdW 2020, 55) and supports economic integration of refugees and migrants in Europe through counselling or language training (Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V. et al. 2016, 5). Its more critical applicatory contestation of EUTF's 'innocence' stance comes transparent in its advocacy for an open society and human rights in Germany (BfdW 2017c, 55).

Misereor

Also Misereor aligns with the EUTF that migration needs to be managed for development (Misereor 2020). In contrast to Welthungerhilfe and BfdW, however, Misereor contests the EUTF's self-interested 'innocence'. It highlights that the current circular migration system is mainly benefiting the Global North, in which migrants are assessed based on utility criteria for the Global North's labour market (Spiegel 2023). This leads to brain drain of highly qualified people in the Global South (Raach and Bartels 2023) and enforces "the danger of neocolonial dependency structures and a Eurocentric economy and development system"¹⁸ (Spiegel 2023). Misereor's contestation therefore goes beyond BfdW's and Welthungerhilfe's uncritical assessment of EUTF's 'innocence' stance, as it follows post-and decolonial arguments, which highlight global inequalities and continuing coloniality of how the Global North adapts structures to its needs (KC and Piper 2024, 403).

Like BfdW, it is not advocating for a complete abandonment, but an improvement of the current system, making it truly beneficial for all (Spiegel 2023) and oriented at development goals (Rasche 2023). It demands a system which offers fair and independent counselling for

¹⁸ „die Gefahr von neokolonialen Abhängigkeitsstrukturen und einem eurozentristischen Wirtschafts- und Entwicklungssystem“

potential migrants, so they can make self-determined decisions (Misereor et al. 2022, 3). This also requires more legal paths to Germany (Spiegel 2023; Naceur 2024). But not – in contrast to Welthungerhilfe’s and partly also BfdW’s argument – to meet the demands of the German market better, but to establish a truly fair system, which considers the interests of all parties (Spiegel 2023). By appealing to justice and responsibility in connection to colonial historical links, Misereor’s contestation goes beyond BfdW’s decolonized rights-based approach (Mayblin 2021, 29; Danewid 2017, 1675). Misereor aligns with this theme’s validity but contests its application to a stronger degree than Welthungerhilfe and BfdW, rejecting its ‘innocent’ self-interest and aiming at breaking through global inequalities (Spiegel 2023).

Projects

However, Misereor does not translate its more critical applicatory contestation into respective projects. It only engages in giving workshops for German companies, discussing the benefits of migration (Misereor et al. 2017, 35), which is in line with its narrative (and the EUTF’s) that well-managed migration can be beneficial for development, but misses critical reflection of global inequalities underlying them.

Medico

Medico positions itself in stark contrast to the EUTF. In general, it agrees that migration bears development benefits, due to remittances (medico and GEW 2018, 14). But like Misereor, medico rejects EUTF’s ‘innocent’ self-interest, arguing that the current approach is oriented on utility criteria dictated by the Global North (Gebauer and Lenz 2016). The well-managed migration system therefore merely aims at controlling undesirable effects of globalization - which is the free movement of undesired people (Gebauer 2015). Instead it distinguishes

between regular desired and irregular migrants (Gebauer 2015; Gebauer and Lenz 2016) and therefore hierarchizes people (Lenz 2016b).

By highlighting how global inequalities inform the current system, aimed at creating a system that fits Global North's needs, medico follows similar post- and decolonial arguments as Misereor to contest EUTFs 'innocence' stance (KC and Piper 2024, 402-403). In contrast to the other NGOs, however, medico does not want to reform but fundamentally transform the neoliberal system and its utility considerations. It argues that respecting Human rights "[w]ithout pushing back neoliberal ideology will not be possible. Where only utility considerations dominate, the respect for other people's dignity gets lost"¹⁹ (Gebauer 2015). Instead medico demands free movement (Gebauer and Lenz 2016). It therefore follows again a radical decolonial agenda, as "[t]he liberation [...] from the prison of coloniality, also implies the freedom of all peoples" (Quijano 2007, 177), and it "rethink[s] the basis for all of our assumptions" (Mayblin 2021, 29). Medico is therefore the only NGO which questions not only the application, but the entire validity of EUTF's well-managed migration approach – and thereby repoliticises it the most.

Projects

Medico's radical decolonial advocacy for system change and free movement reflects also in practical contestation. In Germany, it engages with articles, lectures, protests etc., advocating for free movement (medico 2019, 24; 2016, 31), and includes Global South activists in respective discussion (medico 2016, 31). Furthermore, it builds solidarity networks in contrast to the neoliberal system, like the symposia "Cosmopolitan cities – spaces for another kind of globalization?"²⁰ (medico 2018a, 28) and engages in projects fighting racism in Germany

¹⁹ „Ohne Zurückdrängung der neoliberalen Ideologie wird das nicht gehen. Wo nur Nützlichkeitsabwägungen herrschen, geht der Respekt vor der Würde der anderen verloren“

²⁰ „Weltoffene Städte – Räume einer anderen Globalisierung“

(medico 2019, 24; 2016, 42). In the Global South, it furthermore supports migrant networks which urge their governments to not engage in EU politics that aim to restrict free movement (medico 2018a, 9; 2020c).

4.3. Theme 3: development and border regimes

In contrast to well-managed regular mobility, the EUTF represents irregular migration as a challenge for development, as it “exert[s] significant pressure on local communities and infrastructure” (European Commission 2015, 18), and “affect[s] local economic and social development” (European Commission 2015, 12). The EUTF therefore integrates border management in its agenda of preventing irregular migration (European Commission 2015, 13): “A more effective border management in North African countries would in addition lead to a more efficient management of mixed migration flows” (European Commission 2015, 26) and helps “preventing and managing irregular migration” (European Commission 2015, 13). For this purpose, the EUTF wants to build partnerships with respective countries in the Global South (European Commission 2015, 4, 13). It also hopes that better border management will protect people from human trafficking (European Commission 2015, 13). Portraying migrants as threat to other countries’ resources and welfare system, as well as building borders for a “fortress Europe” (Sa’di 2021, 2513) resonates to EUTF’s neo-orientalist agenda in the first theme, aimed at migration prevention (Sa’di 2021, 2512-2513). By disregarding the colonial legacy of these practices and respective consequences, like the crisis at the Mediterranean sea - makes it again act as “an innocent bystander” (Danewid 2017, 1680).

Help

Help contests the validity of EUTF’s ‘innocence’ argument, arguing that border regimes do not make routes safer, but achieve the opposite, as the lack of legal migration paths forces migrants to engage with human traffickers (Help 2025d). It also contests the EUTF by

highlighting humanitarian consequences of border regimes, including numerous deaths and disasters on migration routes (Help 2025d; 2021, 11). Drawing on humanitarian and human rights arguments it urges to transform current practices, aiming at protection of human dignity and human lives, as well as ensuring the right of asylum (Help 2016, 5; 2018, 5; 2021, 11). Help's contestation, however, remains weak, as it is mainly driven by empathy and hospitality, turning the discussion towards "politics of pity rather than justice" (Danewid 2017, 1681). This is in danger of reproducing Europe's 'innocence' stance, as it leaves "Europe's long history of empire and racial violence" (Danewid 2017, 1681) unaddressed.

Projects

This is also visible in Help's projects. Its humanitarian motive to prevent deaths, translates on the one hand into supporting sea rescue organizations (Help 2025d) and delivering humanitarian aid along the migration routes (Help 2016, 8; 2021, 11), but it also leads to prevention of migration (Help 2018, 22), as it implements projects, aimed at "education and sensibilization of the population about the risks and dangers of irregular migration"²¹(Help 2018, 34). Willingly or not – this makes Help align with EUTF's neo-orientalist agenda and validity of preventing irregular migration.

Welthungerhilfe

Similar to Help, Welthungerhilfe contests the validity of EUTF's 'innocence' stance, by arguing that strengthening borders and limiting migration routes makes them more dangerous, instead of containing human trafficking (Welthungerhilfe 2019, 5, 7; Ebach 2025). Going beyond Help, Welthungerhilfe also contests EUTF's validity of assuming that border regimes could prevent irregular migration at all (Ebach 2025). Like Help, Welthungerhilfe

²¹"Aufklärung und Sensibilisierung der Bevölkerung über die Risiken und Gefahren von irregulärer Migration"

appeals to humanitarian and human rights standards to transform current politics, arguing for more humane receiving conditions and criticizing the prioritization of border protection over human rights (Welthungerhilfe 2019, 6, 8). Welthungerhilfe urges to establish more legal immigration possibilities and to rethink partnerships, which aim at expanding border defence (Welthungerhilfe 2025a). Like Help, “out of humanitarian reasons, Welthungerhilfe advocates for changes in the engagement with refugees”²² (Ebach 2025) - thereby referring to the same humanity argument in its contestation, which disregards global responsibility and justice, and consequently stays just as uncritical to EU’s ‘innocence’ stance (Danewid 2017, 1680- 1681).

Projects

Welthungerhilfe’s uncritical contestation shows, as its humanitarian narrative does not even translate into respective projects. It only politically and publicly advocates for not preventing irregular migration flows, but to manage them effectively for development, in line with its stance concerning well-managed migration (Welthungerhilfe 2016, 25) - therefore arguably contesting EUTF’s neo-orientalist, but not its ‘innocence’ agenda.

Misereor, BfdW, medico

As BfdW, Misereor and medico partly published joint papers on that matter, a direct comparison better highlights their diverging nuances.

Like Help and Welthungerhilfe, these three organizations contest the theme’s validity and ‘innocence’ argument, arguing that closed borders make migration routes more dangerous (Misereor 2018, 4; BfdW, medico and stiftung pro asyl 2017, 5), as smugglers have to further evade (Arhin-Sam and Lambert 2023, 5). Like Welthungerhilfe, they further contest that border

²² „aus humanitären Gründen setzt sich die Welthungerhilfe für Veränderungen im Umgang mit Flüchtlingen ein“

regimes could prevent migration at all, but instead simply lead to a relocation of routes (BfdW 2017b, 3; Bröckelmann-Simon 2017; medico and GEW 2018, 28).

They also refer to the same humanitarian and human rights arguments, as Welthungerhilfe and Help, to contest the EUTF (Bröckelmann-Simon 2019; Wipfler 2016; Arhin-Sam and Lambert 2023, 5). In joint papers, medico and BfdW demand humanitarian and human rights standards at the borders, including the right to asylum (BfdW, medico and stiftung pro asyl 2017, 10). In other joint papers, BfdW and Misereor demand protection and legal routes (Raach and Bartels 2023, 8; Naceur 2024, 8; Arhin-Sam and Lambert 2023, 8).

However – unlike Welthungerhilfe and Help – these three organisation’s humanitarian and human rights arguments challenge EU’s ‘innocence’ to a stronger degree by highlighting its responsibility and guilt in connection to externalization partnerships.

All three organizations criticize the establishment of partnerships with authoritarian regimes for border management - and therefore legitimizing them (Lenz 2016a; Naceur 2024, 7; Arhin-Sam and Lambert 2023, 5). Arguing with human rights, medico urges that regimes that disregard human rights should not be supported (medico and GEW 2018, 17) and Misereor states: “Together with Brot für die Welt, we demand the end of security-political cooperation [...] as long as the risk of human rights abuses against migrants and refugees prevails”²³ (Rasche 2023). In this matter, BfdW and Misereor go even further than medico, arguing that these partnerships in fact contrast EUTF’s own agenda, as legitimizing authoritarian regimes leads to increased human right abuses, violence and conflict, which in turn leads to more migration (Raach and Bartels 2023, 6; Brot für die Welt 2017b, 6). With this argument BfdW and Misereor challenge EU’s ‘innocence’ and neo-orientalist agenda, as they highlight Europe’s responsibility for causes of displacement (Danewid 2017, 1680, Mayblin 2021, 28).

²³ „Gemeinsam mit Brot für die Welt fordern wir ein Ende der sicherheitspolitischen Zusammenarbeit [...] so lange dadurch das Risiko von Menschenrechtsverstößen gegen Migranten und Geflüchtete fortbesteht“

However, despite drawing on similar arguments and demands to stop the externalization of border regimes, BfdW and Misereor aim at reforming instead of abandoning those partnerships (Arhin-Sam and Lambert 2023, 8; Naceur 2024, 8; Raach and Bartels 2023, 8). Future partnerships, so they argue, should include better respect for human rights (Naceur 2024, 8), more legal migration routes (Arhin-Sam and Lambert 2023, 8) and inclusion of Global South voices (Grünewald 2024b, 2). At least for Misereor, those reformed partnerships could then aim – in alignment to the EUTF - at prevention of migration: “[f]uture agreements must therefore be linked to stricter human rights guarantees, otherwise they help little to reduce pressure on local reception capacities²⁴ (Rasche 2023). This shows that BfdW and Misereor, just as Welthungerhilfe and Help refer to an uncritical humanity, which “do[es] little to challenge established interpretations that cast migrants as ‘uninvited guests’”(Danewid 2017, 1680) and therefore reinforces Europe’s ‘innocence’ (Danewid 2017, 1681), its neo-orientalist agenda (Sa’di 2021, 2513) and this theme’s validity.

In contrast, Medico draws on similar human rights and humanitarian arguments but urges to transform migration politics - urging the EU to admit people based on its global responsibility (Gebauer and Lenz 2016). Medico argues that border partnerships oppose that, as African countries are asked to restrain their population, which is in violation of the right of free movement (Gebauer and Lenz 2016). With this argument, medico effectively challenges EUTF’s orientalist and ‘innocence’ agenda, following decolonial arguments, which are insisting on “sovereignty that obligates former colonial powers to open their borders to former colonial subjects”(Achiume 2019, 1510).

So, although all three organizations use similar human rights arguments to contest border regime partnerships, only medico translates them into questioning this theme’s entire

²⁴ „Zukünftige Abkommen müssen daher an strenge Menschenrechtsgarantien [...] geknüpft werden – ansonsten helfen sie wenig dabei, den Druck auf hiesige Aufnahmekapazitäten zu mindern“

validity, whereas BfdW and Misereor rather contest its current application. That similar arguments can nevertheless translate into different practices, also shows in their projects.

Projects

Concerning the externalization of border regimes, their work in the Global North is very similar. Misereor engages in political advocacy, thematizing the negative effects of externalization agenda (Misereor et al. 2017, 36), BfdW has several educational programs, informing about the practices on migration routes (BfdW 2024) and medico mobilizes resistance through public campaigns (medico 2016, 24; 2018a, 42; 2019, 24). The three organizations even have a joint project, named “Outsourcing Borders – Monitoring EU externalization policy”, which aims to strengthen critical discourse (Grünwald 2024a; Misereor 2025b). But whereas Misereor’s engagement stays limited to the Global North, both BfdW and Medico translate their critical human rights narratives into projects along the routes, which support human right networks and activists. BfdW supports networks documenting human rights abuses at the borders, such as illegal pushbacks (Grünwald 2025) and publishes reports about increasing repression against respective networks (Giese et al. 2023). Also medico supports structures that monitor externalization, border violence and illegal pushbacks along the routes (medico 2016, 16; 2018a, 20; 2022, 46). Those aim at preventing abuses (medico 2015) and demand political responsibility (medico 2018b; Rosenfelder 2021). This shows that following the same human rights arguments can nevertheless lead to different practical contestation between the NGOs.

This is also visible in their projects addressing humanitarian agendas. Following its humanitarian stance, Misereor supports projects that protect refugees along the routes (Misereor 2025a; Wagner 2015) or raises public awareness in Germany about humanitarian catastrophes on the routes, through exhibitions etc. (Misereor et al. 2018, 37; Supplieth 2017). However,

Misereor's humanitarian concerns also leads it -similarly to Help -to support the prevention of migration, as it supports networks, which advise potential migrants to stay to avoid dangerous routes (Wagner 2015). Just as Help, Misereor therefore ends up reproducing EUTF's neo-orientalist agenda of preventing migration. Also BfdW supports organizations active in humanitarian aid and rescue along the routes (BfdW 2025e; Grünewald 2025). In contrast to Misereor, however, BfdW supports projects which provide information on the migration routes, aimed not at prevention, but for making sure people are fully prepared for potential dangers (BfdW 2018, 7), therefore practically supporting the decolonial demand of self-determination (Achiume and Last 2021, 33), and consequently contesting the EUTF to a stronger degree.

Medico in turn supports projects, following an even more critical humanitarian agenda. Like, BfdW, medico supports networks, which inform and prepare migrants for the onward journey, for example through counselling centres or moving busses (medico international 2018a, 13; 2020a, 27; 2018b; 2015b). But going beyond BfdW, medico supports humanitarian (medico 2016, 16; 2015b) and rescue networks (medico 2018b; 2016, 16; 2020b), which generally connect their practices to political agendas, by emphasizing solidarity and self-determination and thereby consciously going in opposition to EU isolation (medico 2017, 21). Not getting co-opted in EU's migration control agenda, is important for medico and it has removed itself from respective contexts, arguing that it would "rather do projects that support the demands of refugees. In the contemporary aid system this seemed no longer possible"²⁵ (Maurer 2020). Instead of supporting projects that got co-opted by the EU (medico 2016, 15), medico supports self-organized structures to avoid "technocratic migration control"²⁶ (medico 2017, 21). The differences between these three organisations highlight that following similar

²⁵ „lieber Projekte machen würden, die die Anliegen der Geflüchteten unterstützen. Im vorhandenen Hilfesystem schien uns das nicht mehr möglich“

²⁶ „technokratischen Migrationskontrolle“

humanitarian arguments can nevertheless translate into diverging projects that contest the EUTF to different degrees. And it is again only medico that also practically follows the demand of completely delinking from colonial underpinnings (Quijano 2007, 177) - and therefore rejects this theme's entire validity.

This thematic analysis has shown that development NGOs engage both in validity and applicatory contestation, but - by engaging with EUTF's underpinnings differently - to varying degrees. For a better overview, the next section will summarize and discuss the presented findings and especially highlight the different forms and degrees of contestation.

5. Discussion

The analysis investigated how development NGOs appropriate EUTF's development-migration agenda in narratives and projects. The distinction between validity and applicatory contestation offers a framework in how far contestation leads to norm decay (Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2013, 1, 5) and therefore truly repoliticises the EUTF (Facon 2023, 714; Cuttitta 2018, 636). The additional layer of decolonial engagement, further assessed to what degree NGOs engaged in respective contestation.

The first theme discussed EUTF's 'innocent' neo-orientalist root causes narrative, aimed at depoliticization (Zaun and Nantermoz 2022, 2993-2994; Vigneswaran et al. 2024, 795; Sa'di 2021, 2514; Danewid 2017, 1680-1681). All NGOs question the validity of locating root causes only in the Global South, but to different degrees. Whereas Help's contestation neglects postcolonial context (Help 2024; 2025c), Misereor, BfdW and Welthungerhilfe are more critical, highlighting the coloniality of root causes and Global North's co-responsibility (Welthungerhilfe 2019, 3; Spiegel 2023; BfdW 2017b, 1). But only medico fully turns the gaze entirely towards the Global North and therefore completely delinks from EUTF's neo-orientalist 'innocence' agenda (medico and GEW 2018, 4). The NGOs also differently contest EUTF's neo-orientalist agenda of using development aid for preventing migration. Whereas Welthungerhilfe and Help fully align in both narratives and projects (Help 2025a; Welthungerhilfe 2017, 27), BfdW and Misereor contest its validity, by following different narratives. As Misereor's emphasis on humanity misses critical depth (Kuller 2016; Mayblin 2021, 29), BfdW contests it to a stronger degree, following the decolonial demand of self-determination (Achieme and Last 2021, 33; BfdW 2017b, 6). In their projects, however, both mostly align with EUTF's agenda again (Wagner 2015; BfdW 2025b). Only medico also fully delinks its projects, rejecting the entire validity of EUTF's neo-orientalist agenda (medico 2016,

6; Gebauer and Lenz 2016) and therefore repoliticising this theme the strongest (Facon 2023, 714).

In the second theme, the EUTF depoliticizes its agenda by presenting migration as a beneficial manageable issue, following a self-interested stance informed by ‘innocence’ (KC and Piper 2024, 403; Smith 2018, 276; Uhde 2024, 259). It is again medico that repoliticises this theme the strongest, by fully rejecting – in narratives and projects - the validity of this utility-approach, demanding a system change (Gebauer 2015) and therefore delinking from its colonial underpinnings (Quijano 2007, 177). All other NGOs align and only engage in applicatory contestation - but again to varying degrees. Welthungerhilfe and BfdW align both in narratives and projects with the EUTF and use the same logic to simply expand its application (Welthungerhilfe 2019, 2, 7; BfdW 2015). But whereas Welthungerhilfe’s applicatory contestation remains entirely uncritical, BfdW’s applicatory contestation questions EUTF’s ‘innocence’ stance, demanding migrant’s protection from asymmetrical colonial power relations - which also partly translates into its projects (BfdW 2025a; 2015; KC and Piper 2024, 404). Misereor aligns with EUTF’s logic that migration should be managed, but its applicatory contestation is more critical by disrupting its ‘innocence’ stance, highlighting continuing coloniality of current practices (Spiegel 2023; KC and Piper 2024, 403). However, it does not translate this stance into projects.

In the third theme, EUTF’s neo-orientalist ‘innocence’ agenda connects security with development for depoliticization (Vigneswaran et al. 2024, 795; Sa’di 2021, 2512; Danewid 2017). All five NGOs contest the validity of this theme - but to different degrees. Whereas Help only contests the validity of its ‘innocence’ assumption that border regimes can fight human trafficking (Help 2025d), all other NGOs also contest the claim that border regimes can prevent migration (Ebach 2025; Bröckelmann-Simon 2019; medico and GEW 2018, 28; BfdW 2017b, 3). In this theme, all NGOs draw on similar humanitarian and human rights argument to further

contest the EUTF – but to different degrees and forms. As Welthungerhilfe and Help’s concerns relate to “politics of pity rather than justice” (Danewid 2017, 1681), their contestation misses sharpness, which shows in their projects: Welthungerhilfe does not engage along the routes at all and Help’s humanitarian concerns make it reproduce the validity of EUTF’s neo-orientalist agenda of preventing migration (Help 2018, 34). In contrast, BfdW’s, medico’s and Misereor’s contestation goes further, by highlighting EU’s structural responsibility in externalized partnerships, and therefore questioning its ‘innocence’ stance (Lenz 2016a; Naceur 2024, 7; Arhin-Sam and Lambert 2023, 5). But despite similar arguments, their form of contestation varies. BfdW and Misereor highlight human rights to demand reforms of partnerships (Naceur 2024, 8; Raach and Bartels 2023, 8) - therefore only engaging in applicatory contestation, while reproducing EUTF’s neo-orientalist agenda of preventing migration (Danewid 2017, 1680; Rasche 2023). Like Help, Misereor even translates humanitarian concerns partly into projects, urging migrants to stay (Wagner 2015). Only medico questions again this theme’s entire validity – therefore repoliticising it to the strongest degree - demanding a transformation for justice (Gebauer and Lenz 2016), which reflects in its projects, which consciously oppose EU’s neo-orientalist isolation (Maurer 2020).

This analysis has shown that all five NGOs appropriate EUTF’s agenda differently – in both narratives and projects. Help seems to align the most and medico engages in strongest contestation, mostly questioning the entire validity of themes and therefore repoliticising the EUTF the strongest (Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2013, 1, 5; Facon 2023, 714). As NGO’s contestation differently engage with EUTF’s underpinnings informed by coloniality, their respective applicatory and validity contestation varies in sharpness– even when drawing on similar arguments, such as human rights, humanitarianism, etc. Regarding their practices, the analysis has shown that NGOs tend to install projects in line with their narratives, but that also here the degree of contestation varies – even when following similar arguments. In some cases,

NGOs rather uncritical contestation even translated into projects practically aligning with the EUTF. In summary, this analysis has shown that “politicization is a multi-causal concept“ (Saltnes and Thiel 2021, 110), and - as indicated by network theory - the relationship between the state and NGOs entails a wide spectrum, with full alignment and full contestation just being the two end points (Brass 2016, 45).

Conclusion

This thesis has discussed how German development NGOs appropriate EUTF's dominant migration-development agenda in their own narratives and projects. With the help of thematic analysis particular melanges of validity and applicatory contestation were worked out. The analysis has shown that the forms and degree of contestation – based on engagement with EUTF's colonial underpinnings - varies, between different themes and different NGOs. Also, NGO projects contest and align with the EUTF to varying degrees. Most projects follow respective narratives, but in parts uncritical contestation can even translate into practical alignment. In summary, this analysis has shown that NGOs are neither fully aligning nor fully contesting the EUTF in their own narratives and projects, but their engagement is multifaceted and builds a spectrum, with - in this analysis - Help and Medico being the two endpoints.

This analysis helped to better understand how development NGO's own narratives and projects relate to EUTF's migration-development narrative. At the same time, it raised new questions that require further investigation. The analysis has shown that some NGOs jointly published reports, such as BfdW and Misereor on externalization strategies (Raach and Bartels 2023; Arhin-Sam and Lambert 2023), or medico and BfdW on fighting root causes (BfdW, medico, and pro asyl e.V. 2021). The theoretical network approach indicates, that NGOs tend to cooperate with other actors to achieve similar goals (Marshall and Staeheli 2015, 10, 13). It would be interesting to better understand why, for example, BfdW cooperates with both medico and Misereor, but the two do not, or why BfdW and medico collaborate on some issues, but diverge in others. Further analysis could investigate how NGOs cooperate “around a particular issue, the forms of connections they make, and the circulation of knowledge” (Marshall and Staeheli 2015, 10). This could also shed further light on NGO's internal dynamics, investigating how certain policy strategies and forms of contestation originate from divergent agendas within NGOs (Schneiker and Dany 2018, 47-48). In general, it remains important to put further

investigate non-state actor's roles in the current hegemonic migration management, as “[d]e-centring migration governance analysis will not overturn socio-economic inequality or global power asymmetries but it has an important role in changing the way in which we think and talk about migration” (Triandafyllidou 2020, 13).

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Appendices

Appendix A: Corpus of Analysis

EUTF

1. European Commission. 2015. The European Union Emergency Trust Fund For Stability And Addressing Root Causes Of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa. Strategic Orientation Document. Brussels

https://trust-fund-for-africa.europa.eu/document/download/433626ee-b4d8-4040-a59d-7f49024d2924_en?filename=Strategic%20Orientation%20document%20of%20the%20EUTF%20for%20Africa

Development NGOS

1. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V.

Welthungerhilfe is one of the largest development NGOs in Germany, in terms of donations and revenues (Hölderle 2025). It is politically and religiously independent and active both in disaster relief and development aid. It engages both in projects in the Global South and in advocacy work in Germany. Its headquarter is in Bonn, Germany (Welthungerhilfe 2024, 58). In the period of analysis (2015-2025), state funding has always been Welthungerhilfe's biggest income. In the last annual report in 2023, state funding accounted for 139,8 Mio. Euro in contrast to donations with 87, 7 Mio. Euro (Welthungerhilfe 2024, 38).

The main texts of analysis were selected based on the keyword search of "Flucht (flight)", "Migration" and "Flucht(ursache) (flight/root causes)":

1. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. 2016. „Jahresbericht 2015. Bonn. https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/fileadmin/pictures/publications/de/organization/2015_organisation_Jahresbericht.pdf

2. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. 2017. „Jahresbericht 2016“. Bonn. https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/fileadmin/pictures/publications/de/organization/2016_organisation_jahresbericht.pdf

3. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. 2018. „Jahresbericht 2017“. Bonn. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/fileadmin/pictures/publications/de/organization/2017-jahresbericht-welthungerhilfe.pdf>

4. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. 2019. „Standpunkt. Flucht, Vertreibung und Migrationszwänge“. Bonn. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/aktuelles/publikation/detail/standpunkt-flucht-vertreibung-und-migrationszwaenge/>

5. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. 2020. „Jahresbericht 2019“. Bonn. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/fileadmin/pictures/publications/de/organization/2020-jahresbericht-2019-welthungerhilfe.pdf>
6. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. 2025. „Flucht und Migration gestalten“. Welthungerhilfe.de - Für eine Welt ohne Hunger und Armut. 2025. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/informieren/themen/flucht-und-migration>
7. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. 2025. „Migration muss endlich neu gestaltet werden“. Welthungerhilfe.de - Für eine Welt ohne Hunger und Armut. 2025. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/informieren/themen/flucht-und-migration/migration-gestalten>
8. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. 2025. „Fluchtursachen – Warum fliehen und migrieren Menschen?“ Welthungerhilfe.de - Für eine Welt ohne Hunger und Armut. 2025. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/informieren/themen/flucht-und-migration/fluchtursachen>
9. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. 2025. „Klimaflüchtlinge: Klimawandel und Migration“. Welthungerhilfe.de - Für eine Welt ohne Hunger und Armut. 2025. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/informieren/themen/klimawandel/klimafluechtlinge-klimawandel-und-migration>
10. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. 2025. „Kriegsflüchtlinge: Wenn Menschen ihr Zuhause aufgrund von Konflikten und Gewalt verlassen“. Welthungerhilfe.de - Für eine Welt ohne Hunger und Armut. 2025. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/informieren/themen/flucht-und-migration/kriegsfluechtlinge>
11. Dieckmann, Bärbel. 2017. „Strategien gegen Fluchtursachen“. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/aktuelles/blog/agenda-2030-strategien-gegen-fluchtursachen>
12. Ebach, Dirk. 2025. „Die Welthungerhilfe bezieht eine klare Position zur Flüchtlingspolitik“. Welthungerhilfe.de - Für eine Welt ohne Hunger und Armut. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/informieren/themen/flucht-und-migration/positionen-zur-fluechtlingspolitik>
13. Fahlbusch, Jan. 2018. „Neue Grenzregime sind keine Lösungen. Kommentar zum Asyl-Kompromiss - Welthungerhilfe“. 2018. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/aktuelles/blog/kommentar-zum-asyl-kompromiss>
14. Schlindwein, Simone. 2016. „Refugees welcome, auch für immer“. Welthungerhilfe.de - Für eine Welt ohne Hunger und Armut. 2016. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/aktuelles/blog/refugees-welcome-auch-fuer-immer>

Projects

1. Asrat, Fasika. 2022. „Äthiopien: Hoffnung auf das alte Leben“. Welthungerhilfe.de - Für eine Welt ohne Hunger und Armut. 2022. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/aktuelles/blog/2022/aethiopien-hoffnung-auf-das-alte-leben>
2. Bandsom, Kerstin. 2025. „Libanon: Perspektiven nach der Flucht“. 2025. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/informieren/laender/libanon/perspektiven-fuer-syrische-fluechtlinge-im-libanon>
3. d’Almeida, Celia. 2016. „Investition in unsere Erde ist die einzige Lösung!“ Welthungerhilfe.de - Für eine Welt ohne Hunger und Armut. 2016. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/aktuelles/gastbeitrag/investition-in-die-erde-ist-die-einzige-loesung>
4. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. 2016. „Jahresbericht 2015“. Bonn. https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/fileadmin/pictures/publications/de/organization/2015_organisation_Jahresbericht.pdf
5. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. 2017. „Jahresbericht 2016“. Bonn. https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/fileadmin/pictures/publications/de/organization/2016_organisation_jahresbericht.pdf

6. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. 2018. „Jahresbericht 2017“. Bonn. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/fileadmin/pictures/publications/de/organization/2017-jahresbericht-welthungerhilfe.pdf>
7. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. 2020. „Jahresbericht 2019“. Bonn. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/fileadmin/pictures/publications/de/organization/2020-jahresbericht-2019-welthungerhilfe.pdf>
8. Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. 2021. „Jahresbericht 2020“. Bonn. <https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/fileadmin/pictures/publications/de/organization/2021-jahresbericht-2020-barrierefrei.pdf>
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Medico is one of the biggest development NGOs in Germany (Hölderle 2025). Its Headquarter is in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. It engages in projects in the Global South and in the Global North (medico 2024, 3, 39-42). Since 2022, donations have been medico's biggest income compared to state funding. In 2023, state funding was only at rank 3, with 5.600.830 Euro in contrast to donations, ranking at position 1, with 10.782.428,98 (medico 2024, 30). However, from 2015-2021, state funding made up 40-50% and was the biggest income source in most years (see: annual reports 2015-2021).

The main texts of analysis were selected based on the keyword search of "Flucht (flight)", "Migration" and "Flucht(ursache) (flight/root causes)". To make sure data is only from 2015-2021, waybackmachine was used to access old websites.

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3. Brot für die Welt – Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V.

BfdW is a NGO of the German protestant churches (BfdW 2024a, 2). It is part of the Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie and Entwicklung e.V. (BfdW 2024a, 22). It is both active in service provision in the Global South and in advocacy work in Germany. BfdW has more than 1.500 partner organisations and is active in about 90 countries. Its headquarter is in Berlin, Germany (BfdW 2024a, 2, 39). State funding has been its biggest income in the period of analysis 2015-2025. In 2023, state funding accounted for 172.908.293 Euro, in contrast to donations with 75.944.00 Euro (BfdW 2024a, 30).

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In cooperation with Misereor: Country briefs on EU-Migration Partnerships with Third Countries

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15. Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V., Brot für die Welt, Diakonie Deutschland, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe. 2016. „Hilfe für Flüchtlinge: Gemeinsam Flüchtlingen helfen“. https://www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/fileadmin/mediapool/20_Unsere-Themen/Fluechtlingsdossier/Hilfe_fuer_Fluechtlinge_Juli_2016.pdf
16. Giese, Kerstin, Martina Hahn, Christian Jakob, Maike Lukow, Anne-Katrin Mellmann, Kai Schächtele, und Felix Zimmermann. 2023. „Atlas der Zivilgesellschaft 2023: Gefährlicher Beistand. Schwerpunkt Migration“. Berlin: Brot für die Welt. https://www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/fileadmin/mediapool/Atlas_der_Zivilgesellschaft/2023/AtlasderZivilgesellschaft_2023.pdf
17. Grünewald, Andreas. 2024. „Blog: Die notwendige Kontrolle der Migrationskontrolle“. <https://www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de/blog/die-notwendige-kontrolle-der-migrationskontrolle/>
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4. Bischöfliches Hilfswerk Misereor e.V.

Misereor is the largest catholic development organization (Misereor 2025d). It has both service-providing projects in the Global South and engages in advocacy work in the Germany and Europe. It is currently active in 85 countries in Afrika, Asia and Latin America. Its headquarter is in Aachen, Germany (Misereor et al. 2024, 2, 4, 56-57). Also, for Misereor state funding has been the biggest income in the period of analysis. In 2023, state funding accounted for 158,4 Mio. Euro, followed by donations with 64,6 Mio Euro (Misereor et al. 2024, 37).

The main texts of analysis were selected based on the keyword search of “Flucht (flight)”, “Migration” and “Flucht(ursache) (root causes)”:

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Help is one of the smaller NGOs in Germany (Hölderle 2025). It engages both in humanitarian and development aid and has 127 projects in more than 20 countries (Help 2024a). Its focus is on disaster relief, fighting poverty, hunger and diseases. It has both service-providing projects in the Global South and engages in advocacy work in Germany. Its headquarter is in Bonn, Germany (Help 2024b, 6, 20, 35). Also, state funding has been the biggest income in the period of analysis in 2015-2025. In 2023, state funding accounted 47.395.655 Euro, followed by donations with 19.897.164 Euro (Help 2024b, 30).

The main texts of analysis were selected based on the keyword search of “Flucht (flight)”, “Migration” and “Flucht(ursache) (flight/root causes)”.

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Appendix B: Overview Thematic Analysis

Appendix B Table 1: Thematic Analysis Theme 1. Narratives and Projects

Theme 1: development for fighting root causes

	EUTF	Help	Welthungerhilfe	Misereor	BfdW	Medico
Narratives	Responsibility Global South -root cause for migration is lack of development in Global South	Co-responsibility -root cause for migration is lack of development in Global South -Global North causes climate change, which contributes to root causes	Co-responsibility -root cause for migration is lack of development in Global South - Co-responsibility for root causes lies in Global North *geopolitical influences on root causes * Global inequalities reason for migration	Co-responsibility -root cause for migration is lack of development in Global South - exploitative globalized economy for Global North profit, produces root causes	Co-responsibility -root cause for migration is lack of development in Global South -Global North's exploitative and destructive geoeconomics and geopolitics *structural global inequalities	Responsibility Global North -real root causes are in Global North *structural global inequalities *EU capitalist economy exploits and destroys livelihood in Global South
	Role of development aid -development to address and prevent migration * peace and stability *resilience-building *economic growth and development * capacity-building	Role of development aid - development to address root causes and prevent migration * generate income, resilience-building, reconstruction - sustainable lifestyle and action against climate change	Role of development aid -responsibility on politics *need to transform current politics for development and fighting root causes -own development agenda: address root causes and prevent migration * socio-economic development, resilience- and capacity building	Role of development aid -transformation processes in Global North politics necessary -making globalization fairer *laws against exploitative structures -development to address root causes - transformation of development understanding: putting humans in centre	Role of development aid -transformation of development understanding *development aid to address root causes * development aid includes advocating for political transformation *give perspectives in Global South so that people can have self-determined life	Role of development aid -transformation of development understanding -fighting root causes must start in Global North *fundamental transformation of neoliberal capitalist society necessary -fighting root causes means global redistribution and giving up privileges - migration as legitimate survival strategy: needs freedom of movement
Projects		Focus on Global South -improving living conditions and giving perspectives * climate adaptation and reconstruction * conflict resolution * skill training and small businesses for income generation -political advocacy for addressing root causes in Global South	Focus on Global South -agricultural development for populations vulnerable for fleeing -reconstruction -sustainable food systems and climate resilience -skill training and education for youth -report analysis about effectiveness of German development assistance	Focus on Global South - give perspectives as alternative: *skills training *peace and conflict reconciliation * strengthening climate justice projects in Global South *education for children Address structural conditions -political advocacy concerning root causes and co-responsibility	Focus on Global South -give perspectives as alternative: *education and community building *fight corruption and advocate for better governance *resilience-building *skill-training * support self-determined small farmers associations *political advocacy for supporting Global South to address root causes Address structural conditions -building global networks against unlawful land grabbing -monitoring and political advocacy against destructive economic and security politics	Focus on Global North and addressing structural conditions -Global South_ high structural inequalities of exploitative trade and land grabbing -Global North_ raise public awareness for responsibilities for root causes

Appendix B Table 2: Thematic Analysis Theme 2. Narratives and Projects

Theme 2: well-managed migration for development

	EUTF	Help	Welthungerhilfe	BfdW	Misereor	Medico
Narratives	mutual benefits of well-managed circular migration -facilitate highly skilled circular migration *meet labour market needs *development impact of diaspora *alternative to irregular migration for vulnerable populations		mutual benefits of well-managed circular migration -development potential of diaspora and remittances -benefits for European labour market Expand current system -economic and development potentials of not highly skilled migrants, refugees and others - needs legal migration routes -fair and respectful well-managed migration between Global North, Global South and migrants	mutual benefits of well-managed circular migration -brain-gain for Global South -benefits european labour market needs Expand current system -economic and development potentials of not highly skilled migrants -needs legal migration routes to improve and guarantee migrant's rights	Domination of Global North's interests -current model mainly benefits Global North *well-managed migration is positive, but only if it is not only in interest of Europe -brain drain risks due to high-skilled migration to Europe Transform current system - needs a fairer labour migration system -needs legal migration routes	Domination of Global North's interests -development effects of migration: remittances -well-managed circular migration to control undesirable aspects of globalization * EU hierarchizes and racializes people for their benefit Abolish current system -fundamental transformation of neoliberal capitalist society necessary -Human Rights: migration as globalisation from below
Projects		Support current system -economic integration and skill training of refugees in Germany	Support current system - political engagement for managing migration for development	Support current system -educational stipends for refugees and migrants in Global North -Global North_ skills training of refugees for integration -Global North_ education and public campaigns against xenophobia and how to support refugees in Global North	Support current system -political work with companies	Engagement for new system -Global North_ raising public awareness for free movement -Global North_ building solidarity and rethink current globalization - Global South_ advocating for free movement

Appendix B Table 3: Thematic Analysis Theme 3. Narratives and Projects

Theme 3: development and border regimes

	EUTF	Help	Welthungerhilfe	Misereor	BfdW	Medico international
Narratives	Borders to prevent irregular migration -irregular migration threatens development -part of well-managed migration system Borders protect migrants -border management to fight human trafficking Partnerships needed - build partnerships to enhance border management	Borders endanger migrants - lack of legal migration routes make them dangerous Transformation: Humanitarian and Human Rights standards - humanitarian disasters on migration routes * migrants on the move need protection and human dignity * EU needs to respect asylum rights	Borders endanger migrants -border management does not reduce smuggling and human trafficking -border management does not reduce migration Transformation: Humanitarian and Human Rights standards -humanitarian and disasters on the routes *enable legal migration routes	Borders endanger migrants -border regimes do not stop migrants -border regimes do not reduce human trafficking, only makes routes more dangerous Transformation: Humanitarian and Human Rights standards -humanitarian and human rights crisis at borders -Need for protection and legal migration routes Transform current externalization system: Human Rights standards -partnerships legitimize authoritarian regimes -externalization in opposition to addressing root causes, because they increase human rights abuses -not complete abandonment, but: * externalization programmes need to follow human right guarantees *include voices from Global South	Borders endanger migrants -border regimes do not stop migrants -border regimes do not reduce human trafficking, but makes routes more dangerous Transformation: Humanitarian and Human Rights standards -humanitarian and human rights crisis at borders -it needs humanitarian and human rights standards at the borders Transform current externalization system: Human Rights standards -partnerships legitimize authoritarian regimes -externalization in opposition to addressing root causes, because they increase human rights abuses -not complete abandonment, but: *externalization programmes need to follow human right guarantees *include voices from Global South	Borders endanger migrants -border regimes do not stop migrants -border regimes do not reduce human trafficking, only makes routes more dangerous Transformation: Humanitarian and Human Rights standards -humanitarian and human rights crisis at borders -humanitarian and human rights reasons to stop border regimes Abandon current externalization system -partnerships legitimize authoritarian regimes -EU forces other countries to do their human rights abuses *degrades right of free movement in other countries -establish legal routes to Europe -fundamental transformation of neoliberal capitalist society necessary -New migration politics based on responsibility
Projects		Humanitarian missions -support rescue missions -humanitarian aid and protection on migration routes -prevention of migration through information campaigns	Support transformation -political advocacy against isolation, but better management	Humanitarian missions -protection and humanitarian assistance for refugees on the route -prevention of migration through information campaigns Support transformation -Global North_ raising awareness for humanitarian crisis at European borders -political advocacy in Global North_ research and documentation of EU externalization	Humanitarian and Human Rights missions -rescue lives on migration routes -information campaigns about dangerous migration routes -support human rights activists and documentation of criminalization and borders Support transformation -Global North_ education about border regimes -Global North_ monitoring of externalization and political advocacy against it	Political humanitarian and Human Rights missions -Humanitarian support and rescue along migration routes *information campaigns about migration routes to enable free movement -supporting human rights networks for solidarity and self-determination -strengthening self-organized structures along migration routes *avoids co-optation in EU agenda Support transformation/abandonment -documentation of externalized border regimes and human rights abuses -Global North_ raising public awareness of human rights abuses of externalized border regimes