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De-Europeanization in the United Kingdom:

British discourse on the EU before and after the Brexit referendum

Master thesis

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Abstract

This thesis examines how British prime ministers have *de-Europeanized* the national identity through their discourse before and after the Brexit referendum – or in other words – how they turned away from the EU by using language. The research is conducted through a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of 25 speeches and statements by David Cameron and Theresa May. The timeframe begins when Cameron promised a referendum on EU membership in January 2013, and ends in October 2017, more than a year after the yes-vote. The analysis reveals that British discourse on common security threats was not gradually de-Europeanized, but internationalised by May by constructing the UK as 'Global Britain'. Language on migrants from the EU to the UK was already de-Europeanized before the Brexit referendum, and did not change significantly after the referendum. In fact, it gradually normalised after Cameron's General Election victory in 2015. This study also reveals that both prime ministers could 'cherry pick' identities, meaning that they could choose between constructing a national, European, or even global identity to their liking per policy area.

List of abbreviations

CDA   Critical discourse analysis

CFSP   Common Foreign and Security Policy

DHA   Discourse-historical analysis

EU   European Union

NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

PM   Prime Minister

Q&A   Questions & Answers

SEA   Single European Act

UK   United Kingdom

UKIP   United Kingdom Independence Party

US   United States

Table of contents

1. Introduction

One of the first questions in the Eurobarometer of 2015, a survey about the public opinion of the European Union, was "do you see yourself as a European citizen?" **(TNS opinion & social 2015, 21-22)**.[1] In total, 60 percent of the EU-28 respondents declared that they feel like European citizens. Out of the respondents from the United Kingdom, 34 percent declared feeling like European citizens, a relatively low number.[2] A great majority saw themselves as 'British only'. In any case, British citizens will probably not be asked the same question after March 2019, considering that their country will likely have left the EU by then **(May 2017d)**.

Academics have become increasingly interested in the connection between European integration and the feeling of being a European citizen in the past decade **(M. Bruter 2005; Michael Bruter 2003; Cowles, Caporaso, and Risse-Kappen 2001; Fligstein, Polyakova, and Sandholtz 2012; Howarth and Torfing 2004; Robyn 2004)**. These academics adopted a constructivist approach, which is also used in this paper. Constructivism assumes that Europe and the EU are not fixed identities, but concepts that change over time and are subject to changing meanings. Nation states play a defining role in establishing their own position in relation to the EU, and are not simply static receivers of European integration **(Richmond 2014)**. Existing literature logically contextualized their case studies in the context of how European integration progressed in the member states, and how this strengthened a common European identity **(Cowles, Caporaso, and Risse-Kappen 2001; Michael Bruter 2003; M. Bruter 2005; Breuer 2012; Coman, Kostera, and Tomini 2014; Michalski 2013; Majstorović 2007; Agnantopoulos 2010; Wong and Hill 2012; Risse 2009)**. The focus in this literature was how the EU acted as an international actor **(see especially Larsen 2004)**, the 'Brusselization' of member states, and the relation between a convergence of national policies among the EU member states and a growing sense of a common European identity **(Wagner 2003, 576)**. For instance, Fligstein et al. concluded that those who participate actively in the EU are more likely to also feel European, compared to those whose economic and social horizons are essentially local **(Fligstein, Polyakova, and Sandholtz 2012)**.

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[1] 60 percent of the respondents defined themselves either as both citizens of primarily their nation and then Europe, primarily Europe and then their nation, or as European only.
[2] See footnote 1.

As the UK was negotiating how to leave the EU at the time this research was undertaken, a new phenomenon occurred in European integration studies. The UK was the state to leave the Union. Rather than European integration, European de-integration became a central topic in British politics after the Brexit referendum. Considering that the UK would leave the EU's institutions, the major focus of academic studies have been how the country would *de-Europeanize* in policy terms **(Brakman, Garretsen, and Kohl 2017; Switzer and Hannan 2017)**. But was the population's feeling of belonging to a European identity also de-Europeanized? The existing literature does not address this. This paper attempts to fill that gap and takes de-integration as a vantage point.

This paper examines how David Cameron and Theresa May de-Europeanized the national identity through their discourse before and after the Brexit referendum. In other terms, it will reveal how they turned away from the EU through their language, but not in policy or institutional terms. The focus lies on British prime ministers (PMs) for two reasons. Not only can they influence the extent to which their nation commits to common European policies **(Larsen 2004, 63)**, they also have a significant impact on identity shaping by either praising, ignoring or blaming the EU for what it has done. A popular strategy in this regard is the 'Us versus Them' divide, in which an imagined group of people is distinguished from an imagined 'Other' **(Machin and Mayr 2012, 77–79)**. In case of European integration studies, representing the nation as Self and the EU as Other in antithetical terms will weaken the creation of a European identity **(Agnantopoulos 2010, 7)**. Such repeated usage of 'we' can define an identity, either by pointing to a common European community acting as an international actor, or rather to a separate nation state that is different from 'the Others'. For instance, when David Cameron was obligated by the EU to open the UK's borders for Syrian refugees, he said that the UK "created more jobs than the rest of the European Union" and frequently repeated that he was "proud of his nation" **(BBC News 2015)**. In this case, the Us versus Them strategy was used to legitimize pursuing a different immigration policy from the EU's. A somewhat comparable and more obvious case of identity deconstruction is found in Turkey. While not a member of the EU and therefore not prone to institutional de-Europeanization, PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan de-Europeanized his country's identity by referring to the EU increasingly negatively since the 2011 elections **(Aydın-Düzgit 2016)**.

1.1 World-view, role conception and identity shaping through foreign policy

An important area in which national identity can be shaped is in the *world-view* of the state's foreign policy **(Keukeleire and Delreux 2014, 126)**. A world-view is a conception of how the world is or should be according to a state. Such a view is defined by a state's history, geographical position and security situation. These views are different in each member state, because there is usually no common understanding of what type of foreign policy should be leading **(Müller 2016)**. Each country also has a different *role conception*, which defines how a country sees itself **(Keukeleire and Delreux 2014, 127)**. For instance, the UK often presents itself as a promoter of human rights, the free market economy, and a special partner of the United States **(May and Obama 2016)**. Constructivists assume that member states can rely on world-views and role conceptions in constructing their own identity **(Keukeleire and Delreux 2014, 326–28)**. Because states have no ontological status, they construct their own identity by positioning themselves in relation to the Others through their foreign policy discourse **(Messari 2001, 235; Aydın-Düzgit 2016, 46)**. The weakness of the EU is that it has no true common world-view or role conception. Instead, member states are responsible for the world-view and role conception of the EU. The EU therefore lacks a well-developed common and independent identity.[3]

'Europeanization' is originally defined as the interaction between national foreign policies and the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) **(Keukeleire and Delreux 2014, 129)**. The process can gradually change the world-view, norms and values, identity and role conception of nation-states and the EU **(Ibid., 131)**. It can be separated in three distinct yet interrelated processes:

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[3] Admittedly, fruitful progress in harmonizing foreign policy came with the enforcement of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009, which introduced a triple-hatted position: a single High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security, who also has a vice-presidential seat in the European Commission and chairs the Foreign Affairs Council **(Nugent 2010, 380)**. But despite this major step towards better coordination, decisions on foreign policy must still be taken unanimously in the Council of Ministers. See Article 24 of the TEU: "The common foreign and security policy is subject to specific rules and procedures. It shall be defined and implemented by the European Council and the Council acting unanimously, except where the Treaties provide otherwise". There are some exceptions. For instance, a member state can abstain from the vote, and some decisions can be taken by qualified majority voting (QMV). However, the decision to request a vote by QMV must be taken by unanimity. See **("Decision Making in Common Foreign and Security Policy" n.d.)**.

- Firstly, as a top-down process, it refers to the changes in national foreign policy that are caused by participating in the EU's foreign policy making, a process called *downloading*.
- Secondly, as a bottom-up process, it is means the projection of national foreign policy ideas and models at the EU-level, defined as *uploading*.
- Lastly, the first two aspects can redefine national interests and the feeling of identity as a consequence of Europeanization. The resulting process that may lead to a convergence in terms of policies and identity between the nation-state and the EU can be summarized in the term *crossloading* **(Wong and Hill 2012, 4)**.

Especially large and powerful member states such as the UK can upload their preferences and models to the EU institutions, and thus project their national policies on to the European level. The extent to which crossloading takes place in the member states has been a subject of several academic bundles and articles **(Saurugger and Terpan 2015; Portela 2015; Pomorska and Vanhoonacker 2015; Wong and Hill 2012; Gross 2011; Balfour 2015)**.

The UK is relatively less dependent on the EU compared to the other member states. Its diplomatic and military power allows policy exertion through a variety of other institutional framework groups **(Lehne 2012)**, which will provide all the more useful once the country has left the EU. Examples are international organisations such as the United Nations and NATO, but also bilateral and unilateral channels. Especially NATO and bilateral relations with the US are popular alternatives. The outcome of these considerations ultimately decides to what extent there is a British commitment to European policies, and the degree of this commitment shapes the perception of the EU in the UK **(Gross 2011, 13; Keukeleire and Delreux 2014, 126–27)**.

1.2 De-Europeanization through foreign policy discourse

By using the study of language as a methodology in two case studies (a method known as critical discourse analysis, elaborated in chapter two), three guiding questions on British foreign policy discourse in relation to the EU are adopted. These questions were identified by **(Larsen 2004, 67–73)** as main empirical discursive questions on EU foreign policy, and I have altered these to fit also national foreign policy:

- Is the UK or the EU constructed as an international actor?

- What kind of international actor is constructed in relation to the other actor?

- What kind of values is this international actor based on in relation to the other actor?

These questions revolve around the main goal of this thesis, which is to illuminate how David Cameron and Theresa May de-Europeanized the national identity through their discourse. The purpose of this paper is to shed light on how dominant discourses can weaken the sense of feeling European in the nation states **(Agnantopoulos 2010, 7)**. Furthermore, even though the UK will leave the EU, it may also reveal whether there is a common understanding of policies in shaping EU foreign policy, or rather an ongoing argument over every policy issue between the nation-states. The latter assumption lies closer to the realists' view which assumes that the current state of play in Europe's foreign policy is a lowest common denominator of the national views or national costs/benefit consideration **(e.g. Gordon 1998; Hyde-Price 2008)**. However, it is also possible that Europe is in some cases a unified actor, pursuing similar goals and common values **(Larsen 2004, 68)**.

Now that the main question and guiding questions are clear, the following chapter will discuss what critical discourse analysis exactly is and how it can be used to answer the research questions. Chapter three describes which specific data are used. Chapters four and five contain the actual case studies of several primary sources. Chapter six will conclude by a presentation of the findings, added by a discussion of shortcomings, and recommendations for further research.

2. Methodology & approach

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a method used to examine how power in social relations is present in texts **(T. A. van Dijk 1993, 249)**. CDA sees language not as a simple form of communication, but as a tool that can change power relations and social constructions. Realities are shaped by the language that actors or institutions use, in opposition to the idea that language is just a projection of the *status quo* or a cover up of what is really happening **(N. Fairclough and Wodak 2011, 258)**. For instance, in democratic societies it is believed that court judges have power to bring justice to society, but only because people think of judges as legitimate. The process of this legitimisation is for a major part created and expressed through language and other forms of communication **(Machin and Mayr 2012, 24)**.

In line of Michel Foucault's findings, the father of discourse theory, an assumption of CDA is that those in stronger positions can create and formulate ideas and turn them into unquestioned truths or falsehoods, and consequentially shape social relations **(Foucault, in Rabinow 1984)**. This is especially the case for politicians within powerful institutions of the state apparatus, because they have access to state information, speak for the whole population, have constitutional legitimacy, and have privileged access to the media **(Weldes et al. 1999, 17–18)**. CDA is therefore a suitable method in analysing identity shaping by British PMs **(Larsen 2004, 62)**.

Besides CDA, there exist many other disciplinary, theoretical and methodical approaches in discourse analysis within International Relations. To describe all of them here would not fit the length and purpose of this research, and has been done extensively elsewhere **(Carta and Morin 2014, 27–30)**. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the term 'discourse' is interpreted differently. Some scholars use the term narrowly, clarifying that a discourse in linguistics is "a stretch of language, larger than the sentence" **(Bullock and Stallybrass 1977, 175, in Carta and Morin, 3)**, while others use it broadly and say that "there is nothing outside discourse" **(Campbell 2005, 4)**. Schneider summarizes different interpretations by quoting some authors in the field of discourse analysis **(Schneider 2013a)**:

"the use of language" **(Chilton 2004, 16)**;
"anything written or said or communicated using signs" **(Fillingham 2007, 100)**;

"the flow of knowledge through time" **(Jäger 2004, 129, translated by Schneider)**;

"talk and texts as parts of social practice" **(Potter 1996, 105)**;

"social cognitions, socially specific ways of knowing social practices" **(Leeuwen 2008, 6)**.

Whether discourse is interpreted narrowly or broadly, all these theories take human expression as a vantage point and link this to human knowledge. The things that people say or write flow back and forth in society, and this process redefines what generally accepted knowledge is. What society holds true over time therefore changes, and as said before, some people have a stronger position to define what is true than others **(Schneider 2013a)**.

2.1 The discourse-historical approach and identity construction

One of the major variants of CDA is the discourse-historical approach (DHA), founded by the influential political discourse analyst **Ruth Wodak (2009)**. In this approach, politics are divided in fields of action such as law making, public opinion, international relations, political administration, etcetera. Each of these fields are again divided in sub-genres, leading to a specialised view of political discourse **(I. Fairclough and Fairclough 2013)**. The word 'historical' in the discourse-historical approach means that social and political backgrounds of a text are integrated in the analysis. Intertextuality and interdiscursivity are central in the approach, although the two differ. Intertextuality is the shaping of one text by another text, while interdiscursivity means that discourses can be connected to and draw from one another in a broader sense **(Aydın-Düzgit 2014, 137)**. Intertextuality and interdiscursivity are underlying concepts in the case studies, because the primary sources are compared in their degree of de-Europeanization.

The reason why DHA was chosen as the approach of this research is because of its emphasis on identity construction, taking the discursive construction of 'Us' versus 'Them' as the basis of discourses related to identity and difference. Discourses can "(…) serve to construct collective subjects" **(Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 40)**. Within the CDA approach on European integration studies, DHA has been used most often as a way of analysing identity construction and how this plays through at the national level of the member states **(Wodak et al. 2009; Krzyżanowski 2010; Krzyżanowski and Oberhuber 2007; Krzyżanowski, Triandafyllidou, and Wodak 2009; Wodak 2009)**.

In applying DHA, I will adapt the three steps as summarized by **Aydın-Düzgit (2014, 137)**. These are as following:

1. Outlining the main themes and discourses, also called the discourse topics **(Van Dijk 1984, 56)**.
2. Exploring the discursive strategies deployed in the discourse topics **(Reisigl and Wodak 2001, 44)**.
3. Exploring the linguistic means that are used to realise these discursive strategies.

The three-step analysis offers a useful approach in studying both macro and micro aspects of discourse, as rightly pointed out by **Aydın-Düzgit (2014, 138)**. The first step will be addressed in the next chapter, which outlines the discourse topics and limits the analysis to a set of actors and political processes and events. These limitations are necessary for the scope of this study and the actual analysis of discourse strategies in chapters four and five.

Steps two and three are used throughout the case studies in chapters four and five. In following these steps, I will use the practical guide of **Machin and Mayr (2012)**. Their book extensively explains how to analyse semiotic choices in discourse, how verbs and specific language features can be used, what representational strategies exist, how metaphor and rhetoric are used, and what hedging and modality are.

Now that the methodology of this paper is clear, I will specify what data are used in this study, what the discourse topics are, and in which timeframe these are situated.

3. Data selection

The data subject to analysis are a total number of 25 documents. These consist of 23 public speeches and press conferences, 15 of which were followed by a Q&A session, and 2 letters. Jäger calls these sources discourse fragments (see table 1) **(Jäger 2001, 25)**. PMs David Cameron and Theresa May are the key actors, the reasons for which were already explained in the first chapter.[4] It would have been possible to also study the discourse of other prominent politicians, such as the Secretaries of State. But in the UK, the PM stands on top of the strongly hierarchical pattern within foreign policy decision-making **(Keukeleire and Delreux 2014, 117)**. On top of that, the unity between British ministries and officials in communicating policies is also exceptionally high, leading to similar discourses among these functionaries and the PM **(Ibid.)**.

Public speeches and statements are the most important aspects of the research, because they meet Hansen's three criteria of having high political authority, articulating both identity and politics, and reaching a wide audience **(Hansen 2006, 82–87)**. The benefit of Q&A sessions is that the narratives and orientations of the speakers are revealed. This is so because interviewees will more easily reveal their identities by speaking of their experiences to the interviewer, and because the dialogical and informal nature of an interview can let the interviewee reveal its own take on constructed identities **(Aydın-Düzgit, 139)**. The combination between formal speeches and informal Q&A sessions is a measure to prevent a one-sided discourse analysis, caused by for instance the monotony of the speech writer or the subjectivity of the interviewer. It also provides a comparative aspect in the research and can possibly bring to light (dis)similarities in discourses through different formal and informal genres and settings.

The discourse topics of these primary sources are migration from the EU to the UK and foreign policy towards Russia. There will also be a brief discussion of the construction of a Global Britain identity, used by Theresa May to legitimize distancing her government from the EU's policies in general. The reason for choosing migration and Russia as discourse topics is that these are controversial and relatively non-controversial respectively in the in the EU,

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[4] See page 2.

in British society and among British politicians. One of the main reasons why a majority of the British population voted in favour of Brexit is because of concerns about migration **(Clarke and Goodwin 2017)**. A poll held in January 2016 revealed that some 46 percent of the British public found that migration in general was the most important issue facing Britain **(Ipsos MORI 2016)**. Similar concerns were raised in other member states, although mostly on non-EU immigration **(Pardijs 2016)**. On the other hand, the UK and almost all EU member states agreed that Russia should be sanctioned to some extent **(Ibid.)**[5]. This was a result of Vladimir Putin's annexation of Crimea in February 2014. While a group of parties that challenge the establishment are increasingly accommodating themselves with Moscow, there is still a broad consensus in the EU that sanctions should not be uplifted **(Council of the EU 2017)**[6]. Although no statistics of the British population's view of Russia exist to my knowledge, the British government remained committed to taking a tough stance on Russia even after the Brexit vote **(King 2016)**.

Because the hypotheses are formulated in a way that discourse over a longer period is analysed, diachronic analysis is used: a reflection of how discourse changed over time **(Schneider 2013b)**.

Actors	Prime Ministers David Cameron and Theresa May.
Discourse topics	Diplomatic measures against Russia, EU migration to the United Kingdom, Britain as an internationalist nation.
Discourse fragments	23 public speeches and press conferences, 15 of which followed by Q&A sessions, and 2 letters.
Time frame	January 2013 – November 2017.
Analysation type	Diachronic analysis.

Table 1 – Critical discourse analysis approach

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[5] The survey was conducted in all 28 member states, asking representatives of 74 political parties about their foreign policy priorities after the Brexit vote.
[6] On 28 June 2017, the Council unanimously decided to extended restrictions on economic relations with Russia for six months.

The next two chapters will turn to the results of the conducted CDA, and use the above data to show how Cameron and May de-Europeanized the national identity through their discourse.

4. British discourse on EU migration

The first section of this chapter analyses David Cameron's political language on migration from the EU to the UK between 2013 and 2016. Considering that such an analysis has already been done by **Ágopcsa (2017)**, I will use her findings as a background to my case study of a single transcript. The second section is a study of Theresa May's discourse on EU migration since her election in July 2016, based on 10 transcripts. These are compared to Cameron's discourse on post-Brexit differences in the conclusion. Notable excerpts are analysed step-by-step to reveal in the clearest way possible the discursive strategies that were used.

4.1 Case study: David Cameron's discourse on EU migration

Although partly outside of the timeframe of this research, it is important to note that Cameron neglected the importance of EU migration before 2014. According to **Ágopcsa (2017, 18)**, he only referred to the issue of *non*-EU migration in his speeches from 2010 until 2013 (the Cameron-Clegg coalition governed between 2010 and 2015). His migration policies were heavily criticised by Eurosceptics. Politicians, the press, and later the wider population blamed the PM for outsourcing border control to the EU. The United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), a party favouring the UK's departure of the EU, gained 13 percent of the votes in the seats it was contesting in the local elections of 2012. On January 2013, as a response to rising Euroscepticism and in an attempt to attract UKIP voters to the Conservative Party, Cameron promised a referendum on EU membership if he was re-elected in 2015 **(Ágopcsa 2017, 18-19)**.

However, even after the referendum was promised, voting intention for UKIP grew stronger, whose electorate desired national control over both EU and non-EU migration. This limited Cameron's aim to maintain a positive image of EU migration, and forced him to use a more negative tone. He pleaded for a need to reform EU migration to the UK for the first time during a major speech in March 2013. In this speech and the ones up to 2015, he politicized EU migrants as a threat and a security issue – known as securitization within International Relations **(Stritzel 2007)**. EU migrants were deemed to be Others who pressured British identity and social welfare. With migration figures increasing, the strategy gradually changed

from securitizing 'unfair' migration to securitizing migration to the UK in general. **(Ágopcsa 2017, 18-21)**. At a Conservative Party conference in October 2014, Cameron pledged that migration would become his main negotiating topic with the EU.

The speech below dates from 28 November 2014, and was held in Rocester, Staffordshire **(Cameron 2014f)**. It was the last time Cameron politicized EU migration **(Ágopcsa 2017, 8)**. After the speech, he refrained from further politicising EU migration. He turned to the success of his economic policies in the run-up to the 2015 General Election, and avoided questions on migration. After the Conservative Party's election victory in May 2015, he avoided the topic altogether. The Staffordshire speech discussed below was held six months prior to the election, when voting intention for UKIP was still high **(Ipsos MORI 2017)**. It is merely a snapshot of Cameron's negative discourse on EU migration.

Construction of the international actor

In the beginning of his speech, Cameron acknowledges that immigration is in principal beneficial to Britain, on the conditions that it is controlled, fair, and in conformity with the UK's national interests **(Cameron 2014f)**:

> (…) Immigration benefits Britain, but it needs to be controlled, it needs to be fair, and it needs to be centred around our national interest.

Cameron then turns to migration from within the EU. He starts off by praising the general benefits European migration brings, and constructs the identity of a 'good' migrant. He begins with **(Ibid.)**:

> (…) let me be clear.

'Let me be clear' is a presupposition, a way of presenting an idea as taken for granted when it may be contestable **(Machin and Mayr 2012, 153)**. It is then sketched out is that it is an obvious fact that the "great majority" of migrants are not moving with the sole goal of benefiting from the British welfare system. It is not clear how many people that great majority consists of. Instead, it is said twice that this group "works hard", followed by an assurance that they pay taxes and therefore contribute to the country **(Cameron 2014f)**:

> (…) [The migrants] work, work hard, and they pay their taxes. They contribute to our country.

This is an apologetic introduction to what follows in his speech, in which he describes the many negative consequences that 'bad' migrants bring along. The good migrant is described at the start of his speech, and is characterized as a person who not only works hard and pays his taxes, but also has a family **(Ibid.)**:

> (…)[They are] in search of a better life for them and their families.

The good migrant not only searches a better life for himself, but also for his or her family. This is again a presupposition, in which the audience is made to believe that the good migrant always has a family. How they travel to Britain is framed by using a rhetorical hyperbole, or exaggeration **(Machin and Mayr 2012, 170; Cameron 2014f)**:

> They're willing to travel across the continent.

The above sentence makes it seem as if migrant families endure an arduous trip from the far south-eastern point of the continent to the north-west, ultimately ending up in Britain. The trip is metaphorically constructed as a long journey. From most European countries however, Britain is reachable by plane within a few hours for less than a couple of hundred euros.

Finally, the good migrant does not stay forever **(Cameron 2014f)**:

> Many of them come for just a short period, a year or two before then returning home.

In sum, the good migrant is one with a family, works hard, and leaves within a couple of years. Britain is the nation which can benefit from migration, but also the international actor which should keep migration "controlled" and "fair".

Type of international actor in relation to the other actor

With Britain constructed as an independent international actor, and a short acknowledgement of why 'fair' migration in principle may be good, the speech turns to the negative consequences. The problem according to Cameron is twofold: the high number of

migrants and the abuse of the British welfare system that some migrants are accused of. I will start with the first issue. The first paragraph directly anonymizes and aggregates the migrants **(Ibid.)**:

> In some areas, the number of migrants we're seeing is far higher than our local authorities, our schools and our hospitals can cope with.

Migrants are not called "skilled workers" or "best talent" as earlier on in the speech, but are treated as a statistic, described as a "number" too large for local authorities to cope with. This has an ideological effect. By framing EU migrants as a number that threatens the foundation of British public services, it becomes a dangerous and different group.

The next part takes a notable turn. Whereas Cameron has up until now constructed a British type of actor, for example by referring to "British history", "our creativity" and "our values", he now refers to a common European history. He starts with the following sentence **(Ibid.)**:

> They're [migration numbers are] <u>much</u> higher <u>than</u> anything the EU has known before in its history.

Migration to the UK is put into the broader context of European migration history. The hedging strategy is used here, which means that Cameron avoids directness while appearing to be precise and detailed **(Machin and Mayr 2012, 192)**. He does so by using the comparative adverbs "much" and "than". Frankly, Cameron does not specify how high the migration numbers to Britain are compared to earlier periods in the EU. In fact, while he keeps referring to disrupting numbers of migration, in the entire speech he never specifically mentions how many migrants came to Britain. He appears to do so in the next paragraph **(Cameron 2014f)**:

> One million people coming to 1 member state (…).

But in what time span these people came to Britain is not mentioned. According to a study from 2010 by the Migration Policy Institute, an estimated 1.5 million people entered the UK between 2004 and 2009 **(Doward and Rogers 2010)**. Some 700.000 stayed permanently, the rest were mostly temporary workers who saved money and then returned home. Therefore, around 700.000 migrants settled in the UK in 5 years. Leaving aside the discussion of whether this is a high number, the fact that Cameron speaks of "one million" migrants

without any contextualization is a strong indication that he purposefully conceals precise numbers to make migration levels seem worse than they are. He also conceals the fact that five years earlier, during the 2010 election, he made a similar pledge as in this speech of reducing migration numbers to "tens of thousands a year" **("INVITATION TO JOIN THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITAIN - The Conservative Manifesto 2010" 2010, 21)**.

A similar reference to European history is made in the following sentence. Comparative adverbs are used, followed by a presupposition, which means that untrue or contestable ideas are taken for granted **(Machin and Mayr 2012, 153–62; Cameron 2014f)**:

> They're [migration numbers are] <u>far higher than</u> what the founding fathers envisaged when the European Economic Community was established in 1957 or what Margaret Thatcher and Helmut Kohl envisaged when they signed the Single European Act in 1986.

The eleven founding fathers never envisaged a limit to the number of migrants. On the contrary, they laid down the freedom of movement for workers and planned future European integration in the Treaty of Rome of 1957 **(Judt 2006, 303)**. Moreover, the Single European Act (SEA) was meant to add new momentum to the process of European integration. This process would eventually lead to the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 and several Schengen Agreements, which gradually phased out the existence of internal borders in the EU **(Marzocchi 2017)**. Given that Margaret Thatcher and Helmut Kohl agreed to establish a common market and abolish internal borders by signing the SEA, it makes little sense to state that they did not envisage a spike in migration numbers. Yet Cameron uses these historical figures and the founding fathers, who were both vital in improving European integration, to strengthen his national anti-migration vision.

The second issue is pressure on social security, and is also used to construct a view of migrants who are generally abusive and a threat to the national social welfare system **(Cameron 2014f)**:

> So many people, so fast is placing real burdens on our public services. There are secondary schools where the turnover of pupils can be as high as 1 third of the whole school inside a year. There are primary schools where dozens of languages are spoken, with only a small minority speaking English as their first language. There are

hospitals where maternity units are under great pressure because birth rates have increased dramatically. There are accident and emergency departments, as we know, under serious pressure. There's pressure on social housing that can't be met.

There are a couple of issues mentioned here: pressure on public services, low pupil turnover, pressure on hospitals and emergency services, and pressure on social housing. Indeed, the population size has grown massively in the UK since the 1990s, and most of this growth was caused by migration. Net migration (the difference between the number of immigrants and the number of emigrants) increased the population size by more than 250.000 people per year from 2004 to 2015, which was approximately 50.000 more than the yearly natural growth per year for that period **(Khomami 2017)**. A larger population naturally implies that more doctors are needed, and more houses need to be built. Pressure on hospitals or an increase in housing prices can otherwise be the consequence.

But Cameron does not blame these problems on population growth. Instead, migrants are blamed collectively as a group who cause the pressure on social benefits and public services. They are the ones who have come to pick the fruits of the British welfare system **(Cameron 2014f)**:

> And all this in a country with a generous non-contributory welfare system. All of this is raising real issues of fairness.

Cameron could have acknowledged that the British welfare system has had a hard time keeping up with population growth in general. Instead, by "raising real issues of fairness", he hints to the idea that migrants who benefit from the British welfare system are unfair. But according to research, 60 percent of the migrants who entered the UK from Central and Eastern European countries were less likely to claim benefits than natives who receive state benefits or tax credits, and 58 percent less likely to live in social housing between 2004 and 2009. Also, these migrants made a positive contribution to public finance since the EU enlargement in 2004. This is because relatively more of them participated in the labour force, paid more indirect taxes, and made less use of benefits and public services **(Dustmann, Frattini, and Halls 2009)**.

Despite research suggesting that migrants bring more fiscal benefits than costs, Cameron proposes that they should live with less rights compared to those born in Britain. He goes a

step further than the Us versus Them division, because he suggests that the constructed 'Others' are undeserving, second-class citizens **(Cameron 2014f)**:

> This is about saying <u>our welfare system</u>, in a way, should be like a <u>national club</u>. It's made up of the contributions of hardworking <u>British taxpayers</u>, millions of people <u>doing the right thing</u>, paying into the system, generation after generation. It cannot be right that migrants can turn up and claim full rights to this club straight away.
>
> So let's be clear what all these changes taken together will mean. <u>EU migrants</u> should have a job offer before they come here. <u>UK taxpayers</u> will not support them if they don't. And once they're in work, they won't get benefits or social housing from Britain unless they've been here for at least 4 years. Yes, these are radical reforms, but they are also reasonable and fair. (…).

An Us versus Them construct is created by representing the welfare system as "ours", and by distinguishing UK taxpayers, who are "doing the right thing", from EU migrants. Rather than recognizing the millions of pounds migrants have contributed to it, the welfare system is described as a metaphorical national club made up of contributions by "British" taxpayers. Migrants are collectivized as a group that turns up and takes away from this club. The irony in this is that many UK taxpayers are in fact EU migrants, and that some 58 percent of EU job seekers already had a job offer before even entering the UK in the end of 2014 **("Migration Statistics Quarterly Report" 2014)**. Yet Cameron suggests that new EU migrants are not supposed to receive benefits or social housing "from Britain". The issue of fairness is again raised – granting EU migrants less rights to benefits is necessary to protect the British population. Again ironically, the British population is largely made up by a diverse ethnic population originating from different countries, including migrants from the EU.

Values of the international actor in relation to the other

Britain is depicted as a nation that has a lot of characteristics to be proud of, historically as well as in the present. This pride is based on the success of the multiracial democracy, where people from different backgrounds have worked together on building a common home **(Cameron 2014f)**:

When I think about what makes me proud to be British, yes, it's <u>our history</u>, <u>our values</u>, <u>our creativity</u>, <u>our compassion</u>. But there is something else too. I am extremely proud that together we have built a successful, multi racial democracy. A country where, in 1 or 2 generations, people can come with nothing, and rise as high as their talent allows. A country whose success has been founded not on building separate futures, but rather on coming together to build a common home.

(…) Our openness is part of who we are. We should celebrate it. We should never allow anyone to demonise it. And we must never give in to those who would throw away <u>our values</u> with the appalling prospect of repatriating migrants who are here totally legally and have lived here for years. We are Great Britain because of immigration, not in spite of it.

Most of the above paragraph is vague and meaningless. Is Cameron proud of Britain's history in which it colonized a large part of the world, or its liberation of Europe from Nazi Germany? What does openness mean when a nation tries to restrict migration to the rich or highly skilled? And why does he make a plea to not throw away "our values" in repatriating migrants who reside legally in the UK, while at the same time trying to restrict legal EU migration?

The construction of good British values makes Cameron's discourse on restricting EU migration seem as less drastic than it otherwise would. It allows for an Us versus Them depiction, in which the UK's population opposes the influx of 'bad' migrants. It is British values and history that make Cameron proud, not those of Europe. The construction of European values would have made EU migrants part of British society and culture. By referring to separate Britain values, it is suggested that the British people are indeed a distinguished kind of people from the rest of Europe. But by constructing Britain as an open and tolerant nation while also pleading for restricted legal EU migration, the idea of what Britain's open and tolerant values are remains vague.

4.2 Case Study: Theresa May's discourse on EU migration

Construction of the international actor

The international actor constructed post-Brexit is ambiguous in the studied texts. Take for instance the following Q&A session after a press conference with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on 20 July 2016, shortly after May's appointment as PM, in which the UK is framed as an independent international actor **(May and Merkel 2016)**:

> [the British people] wanted to see control brought into the movement of people from the European Union into the United Kingdom. (…) we as a government will deliver on [the issue of free movement] for people.

Here it is emphasized that the British leave-voters wanted to see its own government regain control over its borders, without the interference of other states. "The European Union" is already described as something different than "the United Kingdom", even though the UK was still a member state of the EU in 2016. Notably, the idea that the UK will decide on migration policy with disregard of the rest is quickly dropped by May **(Ibid.)**:

> (…) we have 2 women here who (…) want to deliver the best possible results for the people of the UK and the people of Germany.

This ambiguity continues throughout all the other texts. After a joint press statement with Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydło one week later, May responded to a question on Polish citizen's rights **(May and Szydło 2016a)**:

> While we are members of the EU, there will be no change for Polish citizens [in the UK].

Followed by a statement on their rights after the UK leaves the EU **(Ibid.)**:

> As regards to the future, it is a very clear message that has come from the vote of <u>the British people</u>, that they don't want free movement to continue the way that it has been in the past, and that they do want some control in relation to free movement. That, of course, will be one of the issues that we will be looking at in the negotiation that we take forward.

The UK will still act together with Poland in resolving the "issue" of freedom of movement. Interestingly, "The British people" are giving a mandate in restricting free movement to the

UK. This is a synecdoche – in which a part represents the whole - where the government acts on its own behalf without the EU by the virtue of the democratic decision of the British people **(Machin and Mayr 2012, 172)**. In this case, the government is legitimized to implement stricter border controls. This kind of discourse is a consequence of the future de-Europeanization of British policies on migration.

A few months later, May took a slightly different stance on the UK as an international actor **(May and Szydło 2016b)**:

> I have also reiterated my plan to guarantee the rights of Poles (…). And I hope we can reach an early agreement on this issue.

The synecdoche of acting on behalf of the British people is left out here, and instead the rights of Poles are guaranteed under "my plan", making May herself the international actor. A similar discourse was adapted during a Q&A session with the Italian PM Paolo Gentiloni **(May and Paolo 2017)**:

> (…) as a UK Prime Minister, I must, of course, also think of the UK citizens who are living in what would be the 27 remaining states of the EU.

In the House of Commons, references to the UK as an international actor are usually stronger. For instance, in December 2016 May said **(May 2016)**:

> (…) a deal will mean that when it comes to decision about our national interest, such as how we control immigration, we can make these decision for ourselves. And a deal that will mean our laws are once again made in Britain, not in Brussels.

The EU is referred to with the negative noun "Brussels". But even in cases where national interests are described as the utmost concern, there is always a notion that the rest of the EU should also cooperate as an international actor **(Ibid.)**:

> I welcomed (…) the discussion between the 27 other leaders on their own plans for the UK's withdrawal.

The UK was turned into a more independent international actor in May's discourse during and after her Plan for Britain speech of 17 January 2017. The Plan was interpreted by many EU leaders as a strategy for a 'hard Brexit' **(Asthana, Stewart, and Elgot 2017)**. In the speech, she said **(May 2017a)**:

> Fairness demands that we deal with (…) [the rights of EU citizens who are already living in Britain, and the rights of British nationals in other member states] as soon as possible too (…). I have told other EU leaders that we could give people the certainty they want straight away, and reach such a deal now.

By using the word "demands", the importance of citizens' rights is prioritized. Stating that a deal should be reached as soon as possible and that the UK can already do so "straight away", May indirectly blames the other EU leaders for not having a plan. By doing so, the UK is depicted as an international leader which is on the forefront of the Brexit negotiations, compared to its slow or unwilling EU counterpart. A similarly strong rhetoric is used in a speech to the Parliament two months later **(May 2017b)**:

> [We will] forge a new relationship with Europe (..). We will be a strong, self-governing Global Britain with control once again over our borders and our laws.

A surprising turn in the interpretation of international leadership is found in May's open letter to EU citizens living in the UK. The letter was written in October 2017, more than a year after the Brexit vote. It was written ahead of an EU Council meeting (May 2017e):

> As I travel to Brussels today, I know that many people will be looking to us – the leaders of the 28 nations in the European Union (…)

"Many people" are not looking solely to the UK, but to "us" – all leaders of the EU. It is notable that this group consists of "28 nations", rather than 27 nations without the UK. Instead of representing the UK as a different actor, it becomes a mix with the EU more strongly than before. Such rhetoric is found in the whole letter:

> (…) my fellow leaders have the same objective: to safeguard to rights of EU nationals living in the UK and UK nationals living in the EU. (…) we are united on the key principles.

Why is there a turn to mixed leadership in the letter? The answer probably lies in the assumption that it was as a form of appeasement to the leaders of the other 27 member states **(O'Carroll 2017)**. The Brexit talks had long been in a very difficult stage, and were stuck at the time the open letter was published **(Herszenhorn and Cooper 2017)**. Isolating the British government from the EU by hinging on the hard Brexit rhetoric would have further slowed the progress of the negotiations, as they indeed did after the Plan for Britain where a hard Brexit was first proposed by May **(May 2017a)**. It was therefore politically wiser to construct an international actor as a mix between the UK and the EU. This ambiguity was also found in bilateral speeches with the leaders of Poland and Germany as shown above, but was less strong in national speeches and statements.

Type of international actor in relation to the other

May's discourse on the type of the international actor is shaped by three characteristics, each constructing the UK's identity in relation to the EU differently. These are Britain as a trading nation, Britain as a country open to EU migration, and Britain as a fair negotiator in the Brexit process.

I will start with the first description: Britain as a trading nation. There were frequent references to free trade after the Brexit referendum. In a joint press conference with Chancellor Angela Merkel in July 2016, May said shortly after her appointment as a PM **(May and Merkel 2016)**:

> Here in Germany, there are 1,300 British companies employing more than 220,000 people.

After the speech, a person from the audience asked whether the UK should swap prosperity for migration control. May responded:

> [The British people] want us to ensure that we can have some control on the movement of people from the EU into the UK in future [sic], but we also want to get the right deal on trade in goods and services.

May suggests that there is no need to fully swap prosperity for migration control. Instead, there can be a good trade deal, while simultaneously exercising "some control" over who is

moving into the country. By framing migration as positive when it stimulates trade, without mentioning for instance unemployed migrants, migration is depicted as something good provided that it benefits the British economy. A similar discourse is found a joint speech with Beata Szydło, the Polish PM. May said that the UK values to contribution of Polish citizens who "work and live" in the UK, and immediately afterwards links this contribution to strong trading relations **(May and Szydło 2016a)**:

> Last year, the UK was Poland's second largest trading partner, and UK exports to Poland were worth more than £3 billion pounds.

What is concealed in the above excerpt is the fact that British trade with Poland was so intense by the virtue of the EU's four freedoms, which among other rights guarantee the free movement of people. I am not arguing that the UK would not be able to trade with the Poland intensely after leaving the EU. I merely argue that freedom of movement and anti-protectionist measures stimulated trade within the EU significantly. This is hinted to by May herself when referring to the 1,300 British businesses operating in Germany, the number of which is apparently high because their owners were able to migrate to Germany so easily in the first place. A day after the joint address with the Polish PM, EU leaders decided that the UK could not have access to the single market without guaranteeing full free movement of people **(James and Taylor 2016)**. The conflicting interest of maintaining free trade while controlling the free movement of people is not recognized as such. Instead, May is confident that there can be free trade without adhering to the EU's four freedoms. In a major speech in Florence on 22 September 2017, she said **(May 2017c)**:

> (…) we understand that the single market's four freedoms are indivisible for our European friends. (…) let us be creative as well as practical in designing an ambitious economic partnership which respects the freedoms and principles of the EU, and the wishes of the British people.

Words such as "creative", "practical", "designing", "ambitious", "principles", and "wishes" are an overlexicalization of suggesting deliberate and energetic action, while the actual action that will be undertaken remains vague. These words suggest a degree of uncertainty from May **(Machin and Mayr 2012, 37–38)**. Indeed, the Florence speech was held more than a year after the Brexit referendum, and both UK and EU leaders still had little idea what the

future of EU-UK trading relations would look like **(Rankin and Boffey 2017)**. Nevertheless, positivity remains part of May's discourse on migration and trade, even in times when negotiations were progressing slowly.

The portrayal of Britain as an open trading nation is connected to the second characteristic: the UK as a nation open to EU migrants who benefit the economy. This characteristic was also present in Cameron's discourse, who had a preference for highly-skilled and working people. In a speech with Beata Szydło in November 2016, May praised the Polish people **(May and Szydło 2016a)**:

> Just now, we welcomed members of the Polish community here to Downing Street and paid tribute to the significant contribution they make to our nation (…).

At the same time, there is a preference for Polish migrants who "live and work" there, and thereby contribute to the economy:

> (…) we value the contribution that has been made to the United Kingdom from Polish citizens who have come to live and work in the UK.

Throughout her rather short speech and in the Q&A session, May repeats the notion that "we recognise the contribution that Polish citizens have made to the UK" three times. This praise is later directed at other EU nationals in her open letter, and part of the government's good intentions **(May 2017e)**:

> We want people to stay and we want families to stay together. We hugely value the contributions that EU nationals make to the economic, social and cultural fabric of the UK.

May's discourse on migrants is generally more positive than Cameron's, at least compared to the period when his party was doing bad in the polls. Take for instance the following excerpt from his Staffordshire speech **(Cameron 2014f)**:

> [Our welfare system is] made up of the contributions of hardworking British taxpayers, millions of people doing the right thing, paying into the system, generation after generation. It cannot be right that migrants can turn up and claim full rights to this club straight away.

May constructs no similar 'bad migrants' in any of her speeches. In her open letter of October 2017, she says that EU citizens who paid into the UK system can benefit from what they've put in **(May 2017e)**. But nothing is mentioned about how of EU migrants would be getting different rights, and many concessions towards EU citizens are done in the rest of the letter. In the other documents, citizens from the other 27 member states are treated as equals, on the condition that the rights of British citizens living in the rest of the EU are guaranteed. The objective of the negotiations was to reassure these rights early on and protect both parties, as stated in the House of Commons earlier **(May 2016)**:

> (…) it remains my objective that we give reassurance early on in the negotiations to EU citizens in the UK, and UK citizens living in EU countries, that their right to stay where they have made their homes will be protected by our withdrawal.

The only way EU migration is framed as something negative in the studied documents is when high levels of net migration are discussed. May said a high number of migrants caused pressure on public services in her Plan for Britain speech, which was received as a plan for a hard Brexit by the EU **(Asthana, Stewart, and Elgot 2017)**. But this was purely to argue in favour of a reduction in the number of people coming to the UK, rather than highlighting bad migration or pointing to migrants who claim social benefits without 'contributing' to society. References to controlled migration and its benefits were found over and over in the Plan for Britain speech, and also ubiquitous in all the other studied documents **(May 2017a)**:

> We will continue to attract the brightest and the best to work or study in Britain.
>
> Controlled immigration can bring great benefits.
>
> We will always want immigration, especially high-skilled immigration.
>
> (…) we will always welcome individual migrants as friends.
>
> (…) we will ensure we can control immigration to Britain from Europe.
>
> (…) that process [of immigration] must be managed properly so that out immigration system serves the national interest.
>
> So we will get control of the number of people coming to Britain from the EU.
>
> (…) controlled immigration can bring great benefits.

Brexit must mean control of the number of people who come to Britain from Europe.

A third characteristic of May's migration discourse is that Britain will act as a "fair" negotiator in the Brexit talks. Such fairness should apply to Europeans as well:

> We want to guarantee the rights of EU citizens who are already living in Britain, and the rights of British nationals in other member states (…). Because it is the right and <u>fair</u> thing to do.

> (…) a <u>fairer</u> Britain is a country that protects and enhances the rights people have at work. (…). Indeed, under my leadership, not only will the government protect the rights of workers set out in European legislation, we will build on them.

Importantly, workers' rights are guaranteed by copying European legislation into domestic regulations. However, fairness is again only promised if the EU also guarantees the rights of UK citizens living there **(Ibid.)**:

> (…) I want and expect to be able to guarantee their rights in the UK. The only circumstances in which that would not be possible would be if the rights of British citizens living across the EU were not guaranteed.

The UK is presented as a "fair" nation, but at the same time as a strong independent one that would only be satisfied with a win-win deal on migration. Similarly, in the open letter to EU citizens living in the UK, May promised to put EU citizens' rights on her priority list in the negotiations **(May 2017e)**. Considering the letter was written as late as October 2017, one may doubt whether citizens' rights had the same priority in policy terms as in May's discourse.

Values of the international actor in relation to the other

There are only rare references to shared or different values. While almost all studied documents start with a reference to shared values, these are almost always linked to security and defence cooperation, not to migration from the EU. This relation will be shown in the next chapter. In the context of migration, one reference is in May's Plan for Britain speech where she describes Britain as an "open and tolerant" country **(May 2017a)**. A reference to shared values was made just once. This was in a response to a question about

the reciprocity of citizens' rights. But the response was linked to Britain's and Europe's common safety and security strategy **(May and Szydło 2016b)**:

> We have a shared history, (…), we were able this morning to recognise those many Polish men and women who sacrificed their lives to help keep us safe and secure here in the United Kingdom, as well as Europe safe and secure. And we recognise that and there is much that we share in our values (…).

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has shown the nature of Cameron's and May's discourse on EU migration. It revealed that although both PMs used the topic to de-Europeanize the national identity, this was not done gradually in the run up to and after the Brexit referendum. Instead, political circumstances allowed and sometimes forced both PMs to depict a European identity neutrally or negatively in relation to the national identity. This was clear as early as 2013. When the British Conservative Party came out low in the election polls, Cameron decided to approach Eurosceptic voters by politicising EU migration. He did so by recognizing the problems that a high number of migrants posed for the British welfare system. While briefly admitting that high-skilled 'good migrants' in principal would be welcome in "controlled" numbers in his Staffordshire speech, he also depicted migrants as second-class citizens who were not allowed upon their arrival to live under the same rights as native Britons. By using such discourse, the British population was separated from the Other Europeans. This distinction was strengthened by referring to British – and not European – values such as openness and toleration. Ironically, in a rare case where Cameron did refer to a shared European history by reminding his audience of what the European founding fathers had in mind about migration, this notion was solely made to legitimize stricter migration control. When Cameron won the general elections in 2015, he relaxed his language on EU migration, and largely avoided the topic altogether.

May took up the subject of EU migration again as it became an important topic in the Brexit negotiations. She generally continued Cameron's relaxed discourse from 2015. But also similarly to Cameron, her tone depended on the political circumstances of when and where the addresses were held. In bilateral speeches and those on the continent, she referred to

EU migrants as "partners", "friends", and even shared herself under "us – the 28 leaders of the European Union". In speeches within the UK however, the EU was depicted somewhat more negatively as "Brussels", separating "a strong, self-governing Global Britain" from "our European friends". But May never securitised EU migrants. While repeatedly admitting that the number of migrants should be brought down, she never referred to 'bad' or unwanted migrants and instead spoke of their "significant contribution[s]". Furthermore, she approached the issue ambiguously by describing migration control as a central interest of the British people, while also reiterating her plan to guarantee the rights of EU citizens. The reason for her neutral discourse is most likely that taking a hard line on EU migrants would have kept the negotiations with the EU hogtied even further **(Cooper 2017)**, while taking a soft line would have disappointed a part of the Brexiteers and further confused the weak government on the question whether to pursue a hard or soft Brexit **(*The Economist* 2017)**.

5. British discourse on Russia and global Britain

Having discussed and compared the discourse within the migration policy area, this chapter will focus on the result of a discourse analysis of texts where foreign policy towards Russia is outlined. The analysis is based on 25 transcripts, and is built up similarly to the previous chapter. The first section analyses David Cameron's political language on, based on 15 documents. The second section studies Theresa May's discourse on Russia in 10 documents. These are then compared for post-Brexit differences in the conclusion. Notable excerpts are analysed step-by-step to reveal in the clearest way possible the discursive strategies that were used.

5.1 Case study: David Cameron's discourse on diplomatic action against Russia

Construction of the international actor

In Cameron's discourse on Russia, the EU rather than the UK is constructed as an international actor. Perhaps the most clear example of this is found in the transcript of a Q&A session in Warrington, in July 2014. The session took place in a time when the anti-EU migration sentiment was very high in the UK, as shown in the previous chapter **(Ágopcsa 2017, 24)**. The speech was held within the UK and in front of a British audience. After a brief introduction by Cameron, a member of the audience asked the following question **(Cameron 2014d)**:

> I'm interested to know what can the British government do to help stop Putin and support Ukraine?

The question was specifically about what the British government could do in response to Putin's aggression in Ukraine. The PM responded and referred to Europe and the EU directly nine times. In retrospect, the United Kingdom is mentioned only once. There are also many indirect references to Europe and the EU. For instance, the use of "we" and "our" refers to the European nations that are part of the EU and NATO, rather than to the UK alone. This is visible by the references to "we", "Belgium", "Poland", and "Czechoslovakia" **(Ibid.)**:

I think first of all <u>we</u> need to be clear about what it is that's happening on <u>our</u> continent. You know, this year <u>we</u> are commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the First World War, and that war, at heart, was about the right of a small country, Belgium, not to be trampled on by its neighbours. <u>We</u> had to learn that lesson all over again in the Second World War when the same thing happened to Poland, to Czechoslovakia and other countries. And, you know, in a way, this is what <u>we're</u> seeing today in Europe.

If read as an isolated text, these references have little meaning. But compared to Cameron's discourse on migration in the previous chapter, he presents himself differently here. He is acting as a European leader, not solely a British one, and is dedicated to protecting the continent from a common enemy. The PM does not depict member states of the EU as 'Others'. Instead, these member states and the UK are part of a collective: the victors of the First World War. This construction of a collective differs from Cameron's discourse on migration, in which the EU and its citizens were represented as Others. Compare the above cited paragraph with the following response to a question about how to limit EU migration:

I think part of <u>our problem</u> has been, because <u>our economy</u> is now growing much faster than <u>other European economies</u>, many people are coming <u>from Europe</u> to work <u>in Britain</u>, because <u>their economies</u> aren't creating jobs where <u>our economy</u> is creating jobs.

Economic problems in other European countries are treated as irrelevant to the UK's problems. The only problem for the UK is the migration that results from these economic problems. While the economies of European countries obviously differ, so do their military and diplomatic power. In fact, the UK was very reluctant in uploading its national foreign policy through the EU **(David, Gower, and Haukkala 2013, 55–67)**. Nevertheless, foreign policy towards Russia is presented as something that matters to Europe as a whole, while the economies are framed as 'Others' because bad economies in the other member states cause migration to the UK. Such cherry picking of an international actor is done to legitimize pursuing a common security strategy (by representing the EU as an international actor) and a different migration policy (by representing the UK as an international actor). This is also done in a speech at GLOBSEC 2015, where Cameron referred to "our economies" when discussing European military strategy **(Cameron 2015c)**.

Besides having economic differences, the European continent is also portrayed as something different to the British Islands in Cameron's migration discourse (Cameron 2014f):

> The great majority of those who come here <u>from Europe</u> come to work, work hard, and they pay their taxes. (…) They're willing to travel across <u>the continent</u> in search of a better life for them and their families.

Note how the synecdoches "from" and "the continent" portray Europe as the Other, compared to "our continent" in the response to the question about Russian aggression **(Machin and Mayr 2012, 167–70)**.

The EU is constructed as Self by portraying Russia as Other. In the Warrington Q&A, direct references to Russia and the Russians were made fourteen times, excluding many indirect references. As noted before, Cameron remains almost silent about the UK as an actor, and instead speaks of Ukrainian-EU relations **(Cameron 2014d)**:

> Ukraine (…) should have every right to determining its own future and the relationships it wants to have in the world, whether with Russia, whether with the European Union.

In other addresses too, it is taken for granted that the EU is the international actor to counter the Russian threat in Ukraine, rather than the UK itself. After Russia's military intervention in Ukraine on 18 March 2014, Cameron immediately responded and ranked Britain in a broader international order **(Cameron 2014a)**:

> Britain depends on the stability and security of the international order. That relies on a rules based system where those who ignore it face consequences. And that's why the EU and the United States have already imposed sanctions.

A strategy in constructing a common European actor is by grouping it under the 'international community' with the G7. In Cameron's discourse, Britain does not take action against Russia alone, but cooperates with the international community. Take his statements to the House of Commons **(Cameron 2014b)**:

> Both the European Council and the G7 leaders made very strong statements condemning the illegal referendum and condemning Russia's illegal attempt to annex Crimea in contravention of international law and specific international obligation.

Throughout the whole speech, there are many references to the EU institutions and the G7, which are then put in the framework of the international community. This international community seems to consist of all countries in the world except for Russia **(Ibid.)**:

> Russia's violation of international law is a challenge to the rule of law around the world, and should be a concern for all nations.

Another strategy in constructing a European actor is by highlighting the importance of the EU's common energy market. While the UK barely depended on Russian gas in 2015, this dependence differed enormously per EU member state. Yet Cameron frames a common European dependency on Russian gas. While he does admit that the UK has almost no reliance on Russian gas, he continues arguing in favour of reducing "Europe's dependency" on energy from Russia **(Cameron 2014b)**. Even in bilateral speeches, such as an address with Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, he refers to "Europe's energy supply". Reducing energy dependence is said to be in the interests of all European countries **(Cameron and Renzi 2014)**:

> It is in all our interests – whether, frankly, we're reliant on Russian gas or not, it's in all our interests that all of Europe become less reliant, so we're a more resilient continent

"We" and "continent" are again linked to a common European actor, and apparently Russia is not considered as European as that would revoke its status as the Other actor. Russian aggression is a European problem. In some instances, there are even references to "Europe's borders" **(Cameron and Fogh Rasmussen 2014; Cameron 2016)**. Cameron also threatens with increased "European pressure" and a blockade to "European markets, European capital, European knowledge and technical expertise" if Russia continues to cause conflict in "one of Europe's neighbours" (Cameron 2014c). References to British pressure, markets, capital or knowledge and technical expertise are non-existent in the context of Russia discourse.

Identical references to a Self by speaking of "we" and "our continent" as a reference to the EU, Europe or NATO in opposition to the Other "Russia" and "them" were found in all studied documents. Even shortly after it was clear that the UK would leave the EU, Cameron pledged that Britain would not turn its back on Europe or on European security **(Cameron 2016)**.

However, Britain is not fully absent from references to the international actor. It is often represented as a leading actor in the European framework. The first time the its leading role was mentioned is in a press conference with Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who was then Secretary General of NATO **(Cameron and Fogh Rasmussen 2014)**:

> As 1 of only 4 allies that meet the NATO 2% GDP spending target, we should be encouraging fellow members to invest more and do it more smartly.

The prominence of Britain as an international actor is not limited to NATO references **(Cameron 2015a)**:

> We [the British] were the first to call for Russia to be expelled from the G8. We have been the strongest proponent of sanctions, and a vital ally in keeping the EU and US united.

References to Britain military and diplomatic power are also omnipresent. These are found in the form of references to statistics on its military equipment, its defence budget and its 2 percent spending commitment to NATO, as well as its position as a serious global diplomatic player **(Cameron 2015b, 2015c; Cameron and Obama 2016; Cameron 2016)**. The following excerpt frequently returns in other documents through similar language **(Cameron 2015c)**:

> With the second largest defence budget in NATO, and the largest in the EU, Britain is investing heavily in modernising the defence of our own nations and our forces available to the Atlantic alliance. Over the next 10 years we are spending over €220 billion on the latest military equipment (…).

Britain is always in the lead in setting up a European response to international conflict, and is the strongest European power. This is especially the case in Cameron's single speech after the Brexit referendum. In it he sometimes refers to "our allies" as separate from the UK, and makes eighteen references to "Britain's commitment" and its leading role. These remarks return in a diluted version in all other studied documents, but are always made in an addition to the abundant references to European actorness in the context of the international order. Europe always acts in unity when it comes to decisions on Russia, with Britain playing a very strong role in making these decisions. With this in mind, I will now discuss what type of European international actor is constructed.

Type of international actor in relation to the other

The first important notion with regards to the type of international actor is that almost all studied documents contain references to a shared history in the form of the Second World War **(Cameron and Obama 2014; Cameron and Fogh Rasmussen 2014; Cameron 2014c, 2014e; Cameron and Obama 2015; Cameron 2015c; Cameron and Obama 2016; Cameron 2016)**. There are direct references to "European history" in this context **(Cameron 2014e)**. Notably, Russia apparently has no place in this history, nor in the lessons learned from the war which imply that no borders of a nation should never be changed by violence. Russia's role is neglected, and instead the victors of the Second World War consist of the EU's member states and those of NATO. Cameron admits that these victors have "different perspectives" on the Ukrainian situation **(Cameron and Renzi 2014)**. Nevertheless, what these nations share is fundamentally the fight against illiberalism and the breach of international law. Britain "depends on the stability and security of the international order" **(Cameron 2014a)**, the protectors of which consists of the EU and the United States, as shown in the previous section. By neglecting Russia's role in the war and by reminding the audience that inaction towards aggression has led to a devastating war in the past, it is placed in the role of the aggressor as opposed to the sovereign European nation states.

The EU is therefore placed in a positive semantic context. It is depicted as a good actor which uses peaceful measures to stop Russia's "unacceptable" military advance in Ukraine **(Ibid.)**:

> So we've seen an appalling loss of life, so we have to ask ourselves what more can we do? Now, we're not about to launch a European war, we're not about to send the fleet to the Black Sea, we're not looking for a military confrontation. But what we should do is use the economic power that we have – the European Union and the United States of America – to demonstrate to Russia that what Russia is doing is unacceptable.

Cameron speaks of a "European war", and then refers to "we" as "the European Union and the United States of America". The EU is a metonymy for NATO, because the EU does not have a standing army besides some Battlegroups **(European Commission n.d.)**. This widens the scope of what European identity means: besides having the ability to act as an economic power, Europe's military is also considered as part of the identity. While I do not argue that

the EU and NATO lack cooperation or a common vision, it is clear that Cameron attempts to represent the EU as a stronger power than it actually is **(Toje 2011)**.

The second aspect is of the EU as a righteous international actor, which has set out a "tough, consistent and predictable set of measures to send a very clear message to Vladimir Putin." **(Cameron and Renzi 2014)**. Words like "tough", "consistent", "predictable", and "very clear" are terms which suggest a high degree of unity and fairness on the side of the EU. Later in the speech, it was indeed stated that all EU member states agreed on travel bans and asset freezes for Russian government officials. Such a depiction of the EU as a united and righteous actor versus a destabilising Russia is found in all the studied documents. The following excerpt is just one example. The key player is NATO, which is used as a similar word for the EU **(Cameron and Fogh Rasmussen 2014)**:

> We should make clear to Russia that NATO has only ever sought to be her partner not a threat. But Russia, by its own ongoing illegal actions in a neighbouring country, and threatening behaviour to NATO allies, is preventing such cooperation in the future.

This Us versus Them strategy is then sometimes used to legitimize the creation of a common European energy market, which is according to Cameron "in all our interests – whether, frankly, we're reliant on Russian gas our not (…)" **(Cameron and Renzi 2014)**.

Ironically, before Russia invaded Ukraine, Cameron emphasized that Russia belonged to the international community. In June 2013 during a press conference at Downing Street, Cameron said that Britain and Russia shared interests in "trading together (…), keeping our people safe at home and abroad, and working to tackle big international problems at the UN and, of course, the G8." **(Cameron and Putin 2013)**. Cameron also refers to the World War Two Artic convoys, British vessels which delivered essential supplies to the Soviet Union. He uses this historical event to legitimize the fact that while Britain and Russia have always had their differences, these can be silenced by forming a powerful partnership. Such a discourse is similar to the later discourse on EU member states, which also have had differences but share fundamental characteristics as freedom and liberalism. It is notable how Putin's military advance in Ukraine turned Russia from a member of the international community and a powerful partner, into an enemy and a non-European state.

Values of the international actor in relation to the other

Because Russia is depicted as a European problem rather than solely a British one, Cameron also constructs European values in his discourse. It was already explained in the previous section that the EU was part of the international community, as an enforcer of the rule of law. This image is then tied to the EU as a de-escalating power **(Cameron and Fogh Rasmussen 2014)**. By standing up against an escalating power such as Russia, Europe is "standing up for the principles that govern conduct between independent nations (…)" **(Cameron 2014c)**. These principles are later defined as "Democracy, freedom of speech, free enterprise, equality of opportunity, human rights (…)" **(Cameron 2015c)**. These values unite the European nation states, which should be protected together from "Tyranny, fascism, hatred" **(Ibid.)**. The EU also believes in the sovereign right of countries to make their own decisions **(Cameron 2016)**. In joint addresses with Barack Obama, similar values are used to shape an Anglo-Saxon identity in addition to the European identity **(Cameron and Obama 2014, 2015, 2016)**.

There are no conflicting values between Britain and the EU found in Cameron's discourse. Only after the Brexit referendum, Cameron referred to a projection of "British power and British values" around the world **(Cameron 2016)**, but he does not distinguish these from European values. Indeed, he admits that he is not worried about maintaining a strong and unified European position, and aims to remain the EU's most important European partner in the areas of security and diplomacy.

5.2 Case Study: Theresa May's discourse on Russia and Global Britain

Construction of the international actor

In her first visit to Germany as a PM, Theresa May immediately made clear that Britain is not "walking away from our European friends." **(May and Merkel 2016)**. She instead constructed Britain as an "outward-looking country." **(Ibid.)**, cooperating with European partners in tackling shared challenges they faced. On the Ukrainian situation, May said that Germany and the UK have been a strong and united voice around the world, but should also deepen their bilateral military partnership **(Ibid)**. For May, the decision of British voters to leave the EU is not an obstacle for cooperating internationally, but rather an opportunity to

strengthen relationships. While Britain was still a member of the EU at the time of the speech, it was already defined as a different entity:

Together, we should maximise the opportunities for both the UK and the EU.

The separation of the UK and the EU in May's language is not very remarkable on its own. Even when considering that the UK was still a member of the Union during the speech, it had planned on leaving it a little less than two years later. The distinction is therefore used for simplicity's sake, and in other documents May does recognize that the UK is still an EU member state for the time being **(see e.g. May and Szydło 2016a; May 2016)**.

What is remarkable however, is that May used Brexit to construct the UK as an international actor that looks further than Europe. She stated that leaving the EU presented an opportunity to "strengthen our relations with countries around the world." **(May and Szydło 2016a)**. In relation to that, she set out a "new global role for the UK" **(May and Obama 2016)**. This new global role would not leave its European partners behind in fighting common enemies **(May and Szydło 2016b)**. What is new post-Brexit is that relations with allies "around the world" will also be improved **(Ibid.)**. The British voters are presented as people who want to "embrace the world" **(May 2017a)**.

The new global role for Britain is defined as "Global Britain" in May's Plan For Britain speech of January 2017, which many EU leaders interpreted as a plan for a hard Brexit **(Asthana, Stewart, and Elgot 2017)**. The new role is best illustrated by the following quote **(May 2017a)**:

I want this United Kingdom to emerge from this period of change stronger, fairer, more united and more outward-looking than ever before. (…). I want us to be a truly Global Britain – the best friend and neighbour to our European partners, but a country that reaches beyond the borders of Europe too. A country that goes out into the world to build relationships with old friends and new allies alike.

(…) A great, global trading nation that is respected around the world and strong, confident and united at home.

Britain is constructed as an internationalist actor. According to May, its history and culture are built on it. This does not undermine its international position as a European country.

May admits that the UK is a European country, and proud of its shared European heritage. But during her Plan for Britain speech and afterwards, the portrayal of Britain as a global nation is frequently used in shaping a new kind of identity. According to May, Britain's internationalist place in the world and the global ties that came with it were restricted by the EU. Now that the UK will leave the EU, it can become an independent trading nation. This is represented by language such as "going into the wider world and rediscover is role as a great, global, trading nation" **(Ibid.)**.

Global Britain is able to "chart" its own way in the world **(May 2017c)**. This results in a somewhat awkward narrative of shared European history. For instance, in her Florence speech in September 2017, the beginning of the Renaissance is marked as an historical event that defined what it means to be European (a reference to the Second World War would obviously have been inappropriate, considering Italy's diplomatic side in that event). On the other hand, the UK never felt truly at home within the EU because the British people "want more direct control of decisions that affect their daily lives" **(Ibid.)** than other member states.

One remarkable difference with the pre-Brexit period is that the Global Britain discourse can by shaped by the arbitrariness of the ruling PM, because the UK would no longer have to rely on the EU as an international actor. Global Britain is friendly with Europe and the EU on matters of safety and security, but only because NATO's Article 5 forces the UK to do so and because Europe's security is in the national interest **(NATO 2017b)**. On the topic of migration, but also other subjects not discussed in this paper such as the future of trade, the UK is was described in all documents as a "truly independent, internationalist actor". It is self-governing, but wants to continue to play a leading role in Europe with its outstanding capabilities in the military, diplomatic, and security areas **(May 2017b)**. Notably, in a bilateral speech Poland is praised as an international actor alongside Britain **(May and Szydło 2016a)**[7]:

> Britain and Poland are leading players in NATO (…). Poland has played a leading role in international efforts to secure peace and stability (…).

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[7] Poland increased its military spending from 2014 onwards as a response to Russia's aggression in Ukraine. It reached NATO's minimum threshold of 2 percent GDP spending in 2015. See (NATO 2017a).

The second difference is that there were no references to a common European energy market in all studied documents. This is an EU policy and part of the internal market. May repeatedly admitted that the UK did not want to stay a member of the Single Market **(May 2017a, 2017c)**, and therefore lost a useful reference previously used by Cameron to construct a common European identity.

Type of international actor in relation to the other

May's discourse on the type of international actor is rather similar to Cameron's. Firstly, Global Britain wants to keep tackling shared European security challenges by building a positive relationship **(May and Merkel 2016)**. The Second World War is frequently used as a reason why European nations should work together military-wise. In line with this, Russia is framed as a common threat to Europe, "our continent" **(May 2017c)** that includes Britain and should be protected together. Allies are represented as good actors, for instance the "Polish pilots alongside us in World War 2" **(May and Szydło 2016a)**. She also speaks of protecting "our citizens" against hostile threats, referring to all European citizens **(May 2017a)**. The Us versus Them strategy is therefore roughly the same as in Cameron's discourse, in which Us means Europe with Britain as a leading nation, while Them means Putin's Russia.

Secondly, Britain and its allies are righteous actors who stand up for "freedom and democracy across Europe" **(May and Szydło 2016a)**. They provide security in Europe and around the world **(May and Szydło 2016b)**, and the UK will remain committed to its leading role in maintaining European security even as it leaves the EU **(May 2016)**. This follows from the fact that a common European security strategy is in the national interests of the UK, in opposition to a common European immigration policy. The distinction becomes especially clear in the following excerpts **(Ibid.)**:

> [I want] A deal that will deliver the deepest possible co-operation to ensure our national security and the security of our allies.

> But [I also want] a deal that will mean when it comes to decision about our national interest, such as how we control immigration, we can make these decision for ourselves.

Values of the international actor in relation to the other

Global Britain largely shares the same values as European nations. In almost all of the studied documents, there were references to common values in the context of common security. These are liberty, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and freedom. Such values should be protected from hostile aggressors, a group which includes Russia. The kind of values and the need to protect these together is very similar to Cameron's pre-Brexit discourse. References to a shared history are often made in bilateral speeches **(May and Szydło 2016b; May 2017a, 2017c)**.

Some differences in values appear in May's Plan for Britain and Florence speech. She distinguishes Global Britain's history and culture as "profoundly internationalist", recognizing it as a European country but also one that is independent **(Ibid.)**. The Brexit referendum was not a decision to retreat from Europe, but rather to live up to internationalist values and build on Britain's global culture. Britain's place in the EU came at the expense of these values, and limited an ambitious willingness to trade with the wider world. Furthermore, Britain's political traditions are different in that the UK has no written constitution, has little experience with coalition government, and has a population which expects to be able to hold their government accountable very directly. These characteristics are not absent in other European nations, but they are constricted by the EU **(Ibid.)**.

Nevertheless, May says that the decision to leave the EU was "no rejection of the values we share." **(May 2017a)**. The UK would always stand by and defend these values **(May 2017c)**. References to shared values are not exclusive to common security threats. However, they were used by far most often in these contours. In her Florence speech for instance, May made nine references to common European values when speaking about security challenges. The other five were used in general discourse of a "new partnership", and only one in the context of trade relations **(Ibid.)**.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that British discourse on Russia was thoroughly Europeanized before the Brexit referendum, and took a more internationalised turn after the vote. Cameron referred to Europe, the EU and NATO in his addresses on Russia's aggression in Eastern

Europe in all studied documents. The term 'Europe' was often used as a synonym for Britain and the EU or NATO, acting as a collective against Russia. Cameron constructed a European identity by emphasizing the need of a common European Energy Market, which he deemed to be in the interest of all European nations. Furthermore, he referred to a common European history based on World War Two, and to European values such as democracy, freedom of speech, free enterprise, equality of opportunity, human rights. Britain as an actor was not wholly absent however, and was often depicted as a strong, leading player in the international world order.

May adopted a roughly similar discourse. Most of the same European values were used, and it was recognized that although Britain was now leaving the EU, it would not leave Europe and would still stand by its "European allies" **(May 2017a)**. An important difference with the pre-Brexit period is the construction of Britain as a fundamentally Global Britain. While emphasizing that Britain is a European country, proud of a shared European heritage, it is also a country that has always looked beyond Europe and into to the wider world. British history and culture are also built on this, with May claiming that these are "profoundly internationalist" **(Ibid.)**. Not neglecting the threat of Russia, May legitimized weak de-Europeanization by arguing that the UK's place in the EU came at the expense of its global ties. Not neglecting Britain's shared European values, it was also imaged as having a more outward-looking culture and history, and as a strong and global actor.

6. Conclusion

The main question of this paper was how David Cameron and Theresa May de-Europeanized the national identity through their discourse before and after the Brexit referendum. In previous conclusions, it became evident that both PMs generally used the topic of EU migration to de-Europeanize the national identity. In the most neutral form, they did so by depicting migrants as "European friends", and in the most negative form by presenting them as undeserving, second-class citizens. In the case of common threats, Cameron used the Russian threat to enhance a British-European identity, which coincided with a British-internationalist identity under May. In both topics, there was no stable trend of de-Europeanization since the announcement of the Brexit referendum. Instead, a European identity was deconstructed when it was politically clever to do so. Cameron did so by securitising EU migrants when his party was weak in the polls, and May did so by constructing a handy alternative identity with Global Britain: a self-governing country, committing to each European policy if it served the "national interests".

Although there were no fundamental differences in the degree of de-Europeanization *within* the discourse topics, the constructivist approach revealed major differences *between* the two policy areas. Both PMs made almost no references to common European values or history when speaking about EU migration to the UK. However, such references were overabundant in discourse on Russia, and the PMs often constructed Britain and Europe as the same actors. Europe became a different continent belonging to a group of Others when speaking about EU migration, yet Britain was framed as a part of that same continent when security threats were high.

Cameron's and May's discourse is likely to have had a profound impact on the public opinion **(Hansen 2006, 82–87)**. Negative language on EU migration allowed Euroscepticism to overshadow the British political debate even further **(*The Economist* 2016; Wheatcroft 2016)**, separating the British Us with their own values and culture versus the European Other. On the other hand, positive language on European culture and history that was adopted when the continent faced a common threat, paved the way for a positive public view on security cooperation. Indeed, a large majority of the British population still had a

favourable view of NATO after the Brexit referendum, the number of which was comparable to 2009 levels **(Stokes 2017)**. Against the argument that continued references to a European identity in relation to security threats made sense as the UK never planned on leaving NATO, I argue that migrants were already securitized before the Brexit referendum took place. This link between de-Europeanization and public opinion demonstrates the need to not treat Europeanisation exclusively in policy terms, but also look at how discourses can enable certain 'anti-EU' policies **(Aydın-Düzgit 2016, 56)**.

6.1 Shortcomings and limitations

A shortcoming of this research is how the British public exactly conceived the discourse of both PMs. While this impact is expected to be high considering that PMs have a high political authority and can reach a wide audience because of their easy access to media platforms **(Hansen 2006, 82–87)**, detailed information of how the public conceived speeches and statements remains unclear. In line with this, treating discourse as a concept that constitutes the identity of Britain and the EU on which foreign policies are based is problematic. It overrates the importance and stability of discourse, and is based upon the idea that language plays a key role in the power politics and the social order **(Diez 2014, 330)**. Further research could examine to what extent foreign policy discourse precisely affects the feeling of identity among the audience. A critical side note to this, is that no discourse analysis can provide concluding evidence of what people think **(Schneider 2013c)**.

Other shortcomings could arguably be the amount of documents used in this paper, and the lack of clarification of what the writers had in mind when writing speeches and statements for their PMs. Although the chapters above explained the discourse in 25 documents, these are obviously not representative of how Cameron and May used language in the time span of more than 4 years. It should be noted, however, that the studied documents and secondary literature contained at least all major speeches of both PMs in the categories of EU migration and Russia. These documents therefore provide at least an accurate overview of what discourse was generally used. With regards to what the writers of the transcripts had in mind, it must be understood that this was not a relevant topic in the context of how both PMs de-Europeanized British identity through their discourse. However, conducting a

research into how writers frame speeches and statements would certainly be interesting on its own, and could reveal how they are able to influence the political stance of their PMs.

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