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EU Agenda 'against' migration: the racist foundations of the European Agenda on Migration

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MASTER'S THESIS

**EU AGENDA 'AGAINST' MIGRATION:
THE RACIST FOUNDATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN AGENDA ON
MIGRATION**

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'Immigrant'

'You broke the ocean in half to be here. Only to meet nothing that wants you.'

Nayyirah Waheed¹

¹ Nayyirah Waheed, poet and author, published poem in Salt (2013)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abbreviations..... 4

INTRODUCTION..... 5

LITERATURE REVIEW..... 8

THEORY AND METHODS 13

CASE STUDY EXPLAINED – EUROPEAN AGENDA ON MIGRATION..... 18

CHAPTER OVERVIEW..... 19

CHAPTER I – THE REALIST SECURITY PARADIGM VIS-À-VIS MIGRATION .. 20

CHAPTER II – A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN NEED OF HUMAN RIGHTS..... 24

CHAPTER III – RISE OF RIGHT-WING POPULIST PARTIES 28

CONCLUSION..... 32

REFERENCES 33

Abbreviations

ASA	American Sociological Association
CEU	Council of the European Union
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CORDIS	Community Research and Development Information Service
EAM	European Agenda on Migration
EC	European Commission
ENAR	European Network Against Racism
EU	European Union
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
FRA	Fundamental Rights Agency
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IR	International Relations
OSI	Open Society Institute
SIS	Schengen Information System
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

INTRODUCTION

2015 set a new record as more than one million people crossed the Mediterranean Sea in order to reach the European Union (UNHCR, 2016; Sunderland, Cossé, Simpson, Horne & Becker, 2015). Unfortunately, many migrants and refugees have died or ended up missing during their journey via sea towards the EU, as it is one of the most dangerous and active routes (Sunderland et al., 2015; Amnesty International, 2017). As a result of these unprecedented numbers, a crisis was sparked in the EU, since Member States were struggling to find the best way to cope with the influx on a national level (Crawley, 2016; BBC, 2016a). Consequently, the EU as a whole found itself in the middle of a strong division between different Member States on how to best deal with what they refer to as the ‘migration crisis’ (Crawley, 2016; BBC, 2016a).

The usage of and reference to the crisis as either a ‘migration’ or ‘refugee’ one, highlights the importance of differentiating between those who are in fact considered migrants, i.e., people who voluntarily decide to leave their country due to poverty and/or high unemployment rates, as opposed to refugees who involuntarily flee their country of origin in order to avoid persecution and conflict (Koser, 2015). The definition of a migrant, nevertheless, is often related to the popular yet simplistic view that “‘migration is a problem caused by failed or failing states (or factor emanating from within their territories) that are unable to provide political stability and just economic opportunities for its citizens’” (Regilme, 2016: 73-74). What this does in terms of the ‘receiving states’, is approach global human migration from an economic perspective—migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are only welcomed if they can attribute economically—rather than from a universal human rights point of view (Oberman, 2016; Regilme, 2016). As a result, the carrying of responsibility goes hand in hand with a passive role, if any, on the part of countries of destination, as they assume that the state of origin is the sole and end guarantor of those rights (Regilme, 2016). Consequently, the EU has failed to perceive and deal with the ‘migration crisis’ as a human rights crisis, starting with the choice of that exact term of reference.

The migrants and refugees who survived the dangerous journey, have ended up in different countries, albeit in a disproportionate manner (Koser, 2015). Especially the Eastern European countries have had a significantly lower number of arrivals in 2015 as they appeared either unready or unwilling to share the joint duty of the EU Member States (Koser, 2015; BBC,

2016b). The tensions that followed, led the EU to implement the ‘European Agenda on Migration’ (hereinafter: EAM or Agenda) on the 13th of May 2015.

Considering how reality differs substantially from anything that is initially written on paper, the objective of this thesis lies with the EAM document by setting out the rationale behind the guidelines stated in the Agenda, which the EU followed and acted upon. To be more precise, this study focuses on a critical analysis of the four pillars of the 2015 EAM in the context of racism/racist underpinnings, which translates itself into the following research question:

Are the four pillars of the 2015 ‘European Agenda on Migration’ for dealing with the 2015 ‘migration crisis’ based on racist foundations? If so, how does the Agenda demonstrate these racist beliefs?

The motivation behind this particular subject derives not only from a lack of similar studies, but also, and more importantly, from a personal interest in establishing a link between contemporary institutionalised policies and the ongoing influence of racism—one that is not necessarily as obvious. Moreover, being a daughter of political refugee parents, the matter of migration, especially in relation to racism, is very close to my heart. Despite it being referred to as a ‘migration crisis’, it is first and foremost a humanitarian crisis that unfortunately is dealt with in a rather inhuman manner. Thousands of people, including children, are left to drown, when the only thing they want is to be safe. So much so that they are willing to take dangerous routes and risk their lives, and their children’s, only to be met with fear and disapproval, *if* they are lucky enough to survive. Although being physically safe, they often end up in situations that are prone to racism and discrimination. As this thesis will argue, the EAM is partially responsible for upholding and strengthening those discourses. Hence, the central argument is:

The four pillars of the 2015 ‘European Agenda on Migration’ are based on racist foundations due to their focus on security, the lack of focus on human rights, and the rise and influence of right-wing populist parties, and therefore, produce racial inequality between racial groups.

In order to respond to this question, this thesis will first present a review of the different literature that has been written on race and racism in the EU. Then, a theoretical model will be provided in which the concepts and the central argument along with its criteria will be laid out.

In addition, the research question will be further explained in relation to the chosen methodological approach of this investigation, i.e. policy analysis vis-à-vis race. The theory and methods section will be followed by a brief overview of the case study, i.e. the EAM, as well as of the three discussion chapters. As each chapter deals with one criterion, the main objective is to congruence test every single one of them in order to provide evidence for the central argument of this thesis. Finally, the study will be concluded by means of a summary of the findings, remarks on the limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As race and racism remain an overlooked feature within the discipline of International Relations (hereinafter: IR) (Henderson, 2013; Shilliam, 2020; Bhambra et al., 2020), this section examines racism in EU policy from an IR perspective, as well as racist undertones in EU policy, in order to outline the most important shortcomings in existing IR scholarship with the aim purpose of validating this thesis. On the one hand, the focus lies with the argument that EU initiatives and directives aimed at combatting racism have not only been limited, but also unsuccessful and ineffective due to a lack of prioritisation and commitment, and the rise of right-wing populist parties. On the other hand, it sets forth the scarcity of literature on anti-racism at the EU level, as well as of policy analysis vis-à-vis race. In addition, it illustrates how race and racism continue to be silenced in Europe, whilst at the same time being used as a government technique.

Racism and discrimination in Europe have manifested themselves in a number of ways over time and have been directed to not only newcomers, but also migrant communities that have been present for several generations, as well as historic minorities who have been part of the population for centuries (Fella & Ruzza, 2013). As a consequence, the EU officially incorporated into its founding Treaties in 1999 not only a specific legal competence stating that the EU is ought to ‘take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation’ (EC Treaty, Article 13), but also a core objective to ‘[combat] racism and xenophobia’ in order to create ‘an area of freedom, security and justice’ (EC Treaty, Article 29). This initiated an ongoing debate on how the EU could combat racism in the most effective way by means of law and policy and the implementation of several directives, e.g., the 2000 Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC) and the 2000 Equal Treatment Directive (2000/78/EC).

According to some scholars, however, the legal responses presented by the EU in order to combat racial discrimination have been introduced too late, resulting in a disappointing and unsatisfying level of intervention thereof (Maeso, 2017). Another critique is that the EU’s sole focus on these two directives has not been enough to combat (racial) discrimination, as this requires a global public policy that transcends EU borders (Borrillo, 2003). In addition to this, Shaw (2004) states that “‘there has been little solid action in practice to bring the fight against racism to the forefront of the EU’s policy concerns”’ (p. 5) despite the rhetoric and numerous

paper policies and the fact that race-related issues have become increasingly prominent in public discourse and have significantly influenced policy (Rubin et al., 2014; Human Rights Watch, 2012; Nwabuzo & Schaefer, 2017). As a result, the positive effects of the proactive policy initiatives and sponsoring movements concerning racism of EU institutions are still limited (Ruzza, 2000). That is, as a result of the fragmented institutional dynamics of the EU and organizational structure of this policy area, the progress of the initiatives has been slow and inefficient, resulting in a weak and disintegrated policy (Solomos & Wrench, 1995; Ruzza, 2000). In turn, some activists argue that anti-racism in Europe tends to be solemnly related to migration, which is incorrect, as it should be understood as a concept that is resourced by EU institutions, yet conceptualised by activists independently (CEU, 1997; Adrian, 1998; Ruzza, 2000).

In addition, the literature on anti-racism in the EU is not only limited, but also more focused on covering racist movements rather than anti-racist groups (Ruzza, 2000; Lentin, 2004; Ivarsflaten, Blinder & Ford, 2010; Fella & Ruzza, 2013). Especially the number of comparative and EU-level studies regarding anti-racism is scarce, which is due to the difference in how each Member State regulates its laws with respect to ‘race relations’, the difference in how race and migration are framed by disparate academic traditions, and the linguistic and cultural difficulties that hamper comparative work (Wrench & Solomos, 1993; Ruzza, 2000; MacMaster, 2001). Although the relationship between EU and national policymaking on combatting racism and the role of anti-discrimination legislation used to be met with confusion (Wrench & Solomos, 1993; Maeso, 2017; Solomos, 2020), EU institutions have recognised anti-racism as a societal concern that requires their compliance (Ruzza, 2000; Bell, 2009; EC, 2019).

Since 2010, however, racism in Europe has taken on a far more open, militant and aggressive form (Howard, 2015; Maeso, 2017; Georgi, 2019). The polarising consequences on EU politics have been significant in the sense that right-wing parties have become more successful as they “combine fierce nationalism with welfare chauvinism and a thinly veiled racism, directed primarily against refugees and migrant workers of colour, especially Muslims” (Georgi, 2019: 96). The 2012 Human Rights Watch’s World Report even refers to a European human rights crisis due to a growing xenophobic debate regarding the place of migrants and minorities in Europe and the rise of populist extremist political parties, whose influence reached the policy-level (Rydgren, 2007; Goodwin, 2011; Rubin et al., 2014). As a result hereof, the

EU has encountered a growing presence of racism within the borders of its Member States (Rubin et al, 2014).

At the same time, different scholars (Hesse, 2004; Lentin, 2008; Goldberg, 2009; Dembour, 2009; Maeso & Cavia, 2014; Araújo & Maeso, 2015) argue that the political and policy developments that have led to race and racism being silenced in Europe are to be addressed when dealing with case-law concerning racism. By continuing to silence race and racism, the EU provides a space for the (post-)colonial aftermath of Europeanness, i.e., a sense of a European identity, to present itself in different areas, e.g., political/policy decisions and academia, even in contemporary times (Fligstein, 2008; Maeso, 2017). This ‘Europeanness’ can be found in the dominating conception of racism in policy as a certain belief or attitude, often taking upon a hostile stance towards immigrants and minorities, in which the relationship between race and nation-formation, post-colonial conditions, and citizenship in Europe remains unaddressed, especially after the third, Post-Cold War wave of migration (Sayyid, 2004; Hesse & Sayyid, 2006).

These discourses are also present in legal EU documents regarding anti-discrimination, as their development has brought about a series of significant political and academic discourses with a tendency to “‘focus on the threat of racism to democracy within the Eurocentric template that established Europe’s foundational identity as equated to a democratic culture, while downplaying the discussion on institutional racism” (Maeso, 2017: 4; Sayyid, 2014). That is, from an EU perspective, racism is viewed upon as posing a threat, first and foremost, to Europe’s identity and therefore also democracy, as both concepts are considered to imply the same thing (Maeso, 2017, 2018). Because EU laws concerning the prohibition of (racial) discrimination are based on this same idea and belief, they tend to protect its reproduction rather than actually tackling institutional racism (Maeso, 2017, 2018).

As a result, it is argued that race has even become a ‘technique of governmentality’ (Lentin, 2016: 387) used in order to enable the disqualification of political projections on behalf of non-white people. In order to be more adequate at combatting (institutional) racism, the focus must be on “‘the functioning of specific policies, interventions and projects in which public bodies and civil society organisations participate” (CORDIS, 2013: 3). In addition, the policy framework regarding racism in the EU and set up by the EU must take into consideration the different contexts in which the national policy framework regarding racism of each individual

EU Member State has been implemented, as these are crucial for understanding the overall state of affairs which led to the enactment of the two EU Directives (Fella & Ruzza, 2013).

Other scholars, however, state that “the very notion of the EU sustains a racial conceit by suggesting that the category ‘Europe’ provides a valid and natural basis for the establishment of a political organisation” (Bonnet, 2000: 71), which creates its interest in the subject of race as always being perceived as ambiguous and contradictory, especially considering how “anti-racism remains a jealously guarded national tradition” (Bonnett, 2000: 71). Despite the fact that the idea of establishing various pan-EU anti-racist initiatives aimed at countering ‘race-hate’ groups and attacks has been met with openness by the European Commission, the actual producing of a pan-European anti-racist policy has been limited to statements, declarations and cultural, symbolic acts (Bonnett, 2000; Flam & Lloyd, 2008). In order to overcome this often purely symbolic nature of its fight against racism, the EU must first decide upon how committed it actually is in doing so (Bonnett, 2000; Geddes, 2003).

Despite being a key element of its agenda, the EU initiatives have not been successful, nor effective, in combatting racism, especially considering the power and resources it owns (OSI, 2009; Martin, 2012). This can partially be explained by the reflection in EU legislation of racism and discrimination as something that occurs purely on an individual level (Bakare & Sherazi, 2019; Adam, 2021). Also, all European policy documents on the matter leading up to September 2020—when the Anti-Racism Action Plan was published—would refer to Nazism as the ultimate expression of racism without mentioning its own past of slavery and colonisation (Adam, 2021).

For this same reason, the EU must recognise that its own institutions discriminate and generate racism and adapt its legislation accordingly (OSI, 2009; Moravcsik, 2018). In turn, it is crucial that those who are or have been directly affected by racism are given a seat at the table, which will be beneficial to the success of the action plan (ENAR & Equinox, 2021). Only this way the EU can better understand the root causes of racism (Adam, 2021). Something as powerful as racism cannot be combatted purely by statements or even written policy papers. For this to be made possible, however, the EU must first acknowledge its colonial history, admit that the negative consequences thereof are ever-present, and take it upon itself to proactively undo them or at least set out to do so.

Although the EAM has been critically analysed by other scholars, the link between racism and the Agenda remains unstudied, which is understandable considering how other researchers have pointed out the studied absence of racism in IR. In other words, the gap within literature lies with the lack of studies identifying the underlying racist foundations of specific EU policies. Since racism that takes place subtly and not directly on the surface is even more potent and dangerous, it is important to study it in relation to EU policies. For that exact same reason, the aim of this thesis is to start fill this gap by investigating the role of racism as the underlying rational in the EAM and its four pillars by means of policy analysis vis-à-vis race. Accordingly, this thesis defines racism as “one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices” (DRWorkbook, 2020).

Consequently, the following section will present the main argument of the thesis, as well as the supporting theoretical framework and methods applied.

THEORY AND METHODS

The main question of this study is: *are the four pillars of the 2015 'European Agenda on Migration' for dealing with the 2015 'migration crisis' based on racist foundations? If so, how does the Agenda demonstrate these racist beliefs?* In response to this question, this thesis maintains the following key argument, which will be further elaborated on henceforth:

The four pillars of the 2015 'European Agenda on Migration' are based on racist foundations due to their focus on security, the lack of emphasis on human rights, and the rise and influence of right-wing populist parties, and therefore, produce racial inequality between racial groups.

Despite the fact that race and racism have been a given fact for many centuries, the role and importance of especially racism continues to be either ignored or silenced within IR discipline, which makes it even more important to ask this question. Even though racism is ever-present on all levels, it is not always as visible to the naked eye. That is, the fact that a written measure for example does not explicitly state that it is racist, does not mean that, therefore, it is not racist. On the contrary, often it is necessary to read between the lines and determine the underlying ideas, concepts, ideology, etc., which in fact can be racist or derive from racist ideas.

This line of reasoning has spurred the interest and relevance of this research in relation to the 2015 EAM. At first sight, the pure definition and regulation of this Agenda appears to be a positive development, as it came about as a response to the 2015 'migration crisis', which indicates that the EU is actually taking action on the matter. Nonetheless, when analysing the actual document and its substance, it raises critical questions as to how the four pillars of this Agenda subject to research have been established on the basis of a racist ideology. This has resulted in the following key argument:

The four pillars of the 2015 'European Agenda on Migration' as a response to the 2015 'migration crisis' produce racial inequality between racial groups due to their racist foundations, as:

- a. They are based on the realist security paradigm in which both migrants and refugees are considered a threat to the nation state;

- b. They discard human rights as a whole to be the Agenda's number one priority;
- c. They are the result of right-wing populist parties in the EU successfully pushing for a more repressive EU refugee policy.

The main argument consists of three components that serve as the criteria for the critical analysis of the EAM's four pillars. Although each criterion will be analysed separately, it is important to note that they are not independent from one another. The security paradigm relates to the human rights issue as the preference for the former over the latter leads to human rights being swept under the carpet in the case of the EAM. In turn, right-wing populist parties advocate for stricter border control regimes in the name of security of the EU and at the expense of human rights of migrants and refugees. At the same time, by studying the three elements thoroughly, a link to racism will be established in order to argue not only that each one of them is based on racist beliefs, but, as a result hereof, also produces racial inequality between racial groups, both individually and conjointly. This way, the definition of Kendi (2019), further discussed below, comes into play and serves as the decisive touchstone of the research puzzle.

Also important to mention is that this thesis uses the term *migration crisis* to refer to the unprecedented numbers of people entering Europe in 2015, as, according to many, it functions as a neutral umbrella term that includes both migrants and refugees (Martin, Weerasinghe & Taylor, 2014; Videler, 2017). Notwithstanding, due to the dubious character of the term, single brackets are used in this thesis. That is, although some insist that 'migrant' and 'refugee' are value-neutral terms (Vonberg, 2015), this study believes them to have (received) a negative connotation as a result of socially constructed meanings, partly caused by the media (Berry, Garcia-Blanco & Moore, 2016; Videler, 2017). Therefore, by labelling it either as a 'migration' or 'refugee crisis', both migrants and refugees are 'dehumanised' by some people on the receiving end, as they are considered to be a threat to (national) identity and (economic) security (Videler, 2017). Due to the latter line of reasoning being present in racist ideology—as will be argued in the discussion chapters—the term used for this thesis is 'migration crisis' between single brackets in order to highlight the awareness of its questionable nature.

Before getting into the theoretical framework for this argument, however, it is necessary to first determine the exact definition of racism this thesis upholds, as well as that of racist policy. Racism derives from race, which is generally understood as a social construct determined by state power, group interests, and other social forces (Clair & Denis, 2015) and

thus, can be explained as “an ideology of racial domination” (Wilson, 1999: 14). In light of the many definitions that exist, this thesis opts for Kendi’s (2019), as he manages to combine all these ideas into one clear definition. Hence, Kendi (2019) explains racism as a doctrine or teaching that has no scientific grounds and which does the following three things:

1. Claims to find racial differences in things like character and intelligence;
2. Asserts the superiority of one race over another or others;
3. Seeks to maintain that dominance through a complex system of beliefs, behaviours, use of language and policies.

Consequently, racism “involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices” (DRWorkbook, 2020), resulting in the production and normalisation of racial inequities by means of those racist policies and ideas (Kendi, 2019).

But when is a policy racist? According to Kendi (2019), any measure, law, rule, procedure, process, regulation, and guideline governing people, either written or unwritten, that produces or sustains racial inequity between racial groups, falls under the ‘racist policy’ category, also referred to as ‘institutional’ or ‘structural’ racism by others (Carmichael & Hamilton, 1967; Bonilla-Silva, 1997; Lawrence & Keleher, 2004). In addition, he argues that non-racist or race-neutral policies are non-existing, as “every policy in every institution in every community in every nation is producing or sustaining either racial inequity or equity between racial groups” (Kendi, 2019: 18). This thesis argues that the EAM, on the basis of its four pillars, is in fact a racist policy, as it constitutes a written plan, which serves as a guideline for the EU and its Member States, that produces and sustains racial inequality in light of the ‘migration crisis’. That is, by prioritising national security and border control over human rights migrants and refugees are entitled to, the EU helps to stir up and/or strengthen the far-right discourses regarding a more restrictive migration policy. Hence, this thesis adopts Kendi’s (2019) definition of a racist policy.

On this account, this study is carried out by means of a normative qualitative research in which one single case study is central. The decision to opt for a qualitative method is due to its ability to examine issues in detail and in depth, which allows for a profound understanding

of the issue at stake. In addition, the fact that there is only one case study that will be analysed, means that an even more detailed research is possible, as the focus lies entirely with one document. Although qualitative research is criticised by some for its difficulty to maintain, access, and demonstrate rigor (for example, Ryan, Coughlan & Cronin, 2007; Rahman, 2017), this thesis is characterised precisely by its aim to provide a critical analysis of the document at stake. This can only be achieved by being as rigorous and subjective as possible in order to make value judgments in accordance with normative analysis.

Accordingly, the theoretical framework of the central argument is drawn from the policy analysis approach. Initially, it was defined as a problem-solving model for policymaking, but nowadays the purpose of policy analysis can take upon different roles depending on the specific discipline and/or (public) sector it is used for (Radin, 2013). Browne, Coffey, Cook, Meiklejohn & Palermo (2018) identify three general orientations to policy research, namely: traditional, mainstream and interpretive, each consisting of specific approaches. As the latter focuses on the representation and the framing of the problem by means of document analysis, discourse analysis, narrative analysis, amongst others (Browne et al., 2018), it addresses representation questions, such as: how is the policy problem defined or constructed? What assumptions underpin the problem framing? In the context of this thesis, the interpretive orientation applies, as it concentrates on the analysis of one single document in order to determine how it frames migration to be a 'problem' that needs solving.

Notwithstanding, as race is central to this thesis, it calls for a specific type of policy analysis vis-à-vis race. Although the interest in researching race and racism in the social sciences has grown substantially in the last two decades, race continues to be a complex, sensitive and controversial topic in scientific discourse and public policy, as it categorises people (ASA, 2003; Garcia, López & Vélez, 2017). Whereas some scientists and policymakers are of the opinion that the negative consequences of thinking in racial terms are only perpetuated by the usage of the concept of race in research, others believe that greater social justice can be achieved precisely by studying differential experiences, treatment and outcomes across racial categories, as well as tracking disparities, and informing policymakers on these data (ASA, 2003). This thesis coincides with the latter group. It is crucial for race to be studied in terms of its expressions and outcomes on all different levels of society, as this will continue to bring to light and highlight the fact that race and racism are still present and thus, must be combatted. Without evidence provided by these studies, race will remain silenced or ignored.

In order to conduct an accurate policy analysis vis-à-vis race, this research draws upon the ‘alterity’ approach in relation to contemporary geopolitics, as introduced by Bhatt (2004). That is, it relies on the global economic and political discrepancy between Western nations and Third World countries and their opposing interests (Spivak, 1999; Bhatt, 2004). Thus, racism serves as a “(...) mechanism for eliding the absolute differences in dispensation, status and power between, and the different order of scale and magnitude that apply to, minorities in the West and non-elite populations in the ‘Third World’” (Bhatt, 2004: 17). Moreover, it reproduces ‘Western’ narcissism by evading contemporary global geopolitics and political economy, and it analogises conducive oppositions, such as Self-Other and Otherness (Bhatt, 2004). As a result, alterity thinking discloses and excavates the supposedly important instances of discrimination or previously marginalised identity manifestations (Bhatt, 2004).

The critical analysis of each pillar, however, requires data obtained by means of secondary sources that either offer an important evaluation of the Agenda itself or help to explain the underlying, not self-evident (realist/populist) train of thought. Hence, the additional reports used derive mainly from non-EU, non-profit organisations, such as the European Network Against Racism and Amnesty International, that have conducted their own critical investigation on how the EU has dealt with the ‘migration crisis’. Some will include references to the EAM, others will not. At the same time, scholarly argumentative and survey research papers, conducted either individually or conjointly, will be exerted. By *not* using EU reports, this thesis aims at maintaining an as objective and critical attitude as possible in order to also conserve an academic distance vis-à-vis the issue of race.

Nevertheless, rather than investigating the entire document, the analysis will be limited to the four pillars of the EAM, as they specify the precise long-term objectives of the document. In the subsequent section, the Agenda will be introduced, and the four pillars will be set forth, followed by an overview of the three discussion chapters based on the three criteria of the central argument of this thesis.

CASE STUDY EXPLAINED – EUROPEAN AGENDA ON MIGRATION

On May 13, 2015, the European Commission published the European Agenda on Migration, mainly as a response to the human tragedy in the Mediterranean Sea which needed swift and determined action (EC, 2015; Willermain, 2016). The purpose of this new strategy is to lay a foundation for the EU and its Member States so that they can effectively address and manage the immediate and long-term challenges that migration entails (EC, 2015; IfW & MEDAM, 2019). In addition, it reflects the need for a common joint approach in order to grant protection to displaced persons through resettlement (EC, 2015; Willermain, 2016).

In light of the lethal maritime consequences of the ‘migration crisis’, the EU has had to confront the structural limitations of its migration policy and the corresponding tools (EC, 2015). Therefore, the Agenda serves as “an opportunity for the EU to face up to the need to strike the right balance in its migration policy and send a clear message to citizens that migration can be better managed collectively by all EU actors” (EC, 2015: 6). In order to better its structural migration policy, the EAM sets out four levels of action, i.e. pillars, with which it is ought to develop a “fair, robust and realistic” policy (EC, 2015: 7), namely:

1. Reducing the incentives for irregular migration;
2. Border management – saving lives and securing external borders;
3. Europe’s duty to protect: a strong common asylum policy;
4. A new policy on legal migration.

Consequently, “when implemented, they will provide the EU with a migration policy which respects the right to seek asylum, responds to the humanitarian challenge, provides a clear European framework for a common migration policy, and stands the test of time” (EC, 2015: 7). Notwithstanding, the following discussion chapters will determine whether or not this is the case.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The first chapter discusses how the four pillars of the EAM are related to the realist principle of security. It briefly summarises the course of the security paradigm in Europe, with emphasis on migration, in order to establish a link between the two. Subsequently, it goes into depth on the four pillars by highlighting those parts that are security-based and identifies the consequences they have on migrants and refugees. By doing so, it then focuses on the racial aspect of the security-based approach, i.e. the racist outcomes.

The second chapter further builds on the security topic by focusing on the absence of human rights in the Agenda. It addresses the lethal sea routes by means of which many migrants and refugees have lost their lives in relation to the response of the EU. The EAM comes into play in order to critically analyse the measures it plans on taking after already having witnessed the washing up of bodies. It will demonstrate that due to a striking lack of priority with regards to human rights as a result of security priorities, migrants and refugees are victims of racism.

Finally, the rise of EU right-wing populist parties in light of the ‘migration crisis’ will be discussed. It concentrates on the main ideas these parties uphold in terms of protecting the ‘white race’ due to its superiority vis-à-vis non-white populations, in this case, migrants. On the basis of these discourses, which in itself will be proven to be racist, the third chapter sets forth the relationship between the power these parties hold and the chosen measures in the Agenda in order to determine the racist consequences towards migrants and refugees.

CHAPTER I – THE REALIST SECURITY PARADIGM VIS-À-VIS MIGRATION

This chapter focuses on the first criteria of the central argument of this thesis, that is:

The four pillars of the 2015 ‘European Agenda on Migration’ as a response to the 2015 ‘migration crisis’ produce racial inequality between racial groups due to their racist foundations, as they are based on the realist security paradigm in which both migrants and refugees are considered a threat to the nation state.

Within the widespread ideology of realism in IR discipline, the anarchic state holds a central position as the principal actor in the international area by pursuing *raison d'état*, i.e. national interests, in order to obtain power and preserve its interstate security (Korab-Karpowicz, 2017). In Europe, the importance of the latter started to grow in the mid-1990s as a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) came into force in 1993 and 1999 respectively (Krotz & Maher, 2011). Consequently, these policy areas, and thus security, gained ground as ‘high politics’ in the EU due to:

“—a growing desire in Europe for an increased ability to act autonomously in security and defense matters and to raise Europe’s profile in world politics;
—the institutionalization of patterns and habits of cooperation, consensus building, and consultation in foreign and security policy;
—the creation of European military forces and security institutions;
—and the emergence of norms and other intersubjective understandings, including the convergence of national “strategic cultures” around a common European strategic culture”
(Krotz & Maher, 2011: 549).

In the 1980s, however, policy debates regarding the protection of public order and the preservation of domestic stability in relation to migration were already taking place in Europe (Huysmans, 2000; OHCHR & UNESCO, 2003). The prevailing ideas in these discussions portrayed migration not only as a challenge to social democracies and their cultures, but also as a danger to the entire nation (Bigo, 1994; Den Boer, 1995). This way, migration policy was ‘Europeanised’ by means of security discourses even before the EU was established as such (Huysmans, 2000; Baldwin-Edwards, Blitz & Crawley, 2019). The 1990 Convention for implementing the Schengen Agreement of 1985 serves as a great example, as immigration and asylum are directly linked to terrorism, transnational crime and border control, all in the name

of protecting internal security (Lodge, 1993; Verschueren, 1992; Bigo, 1996). In other words, the Agreement derives from a realist frame that subscribes to the principle that “illegal immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees are equal in the sense that they are third-country nationals whose entry into the state’s territory must be controlled for the sake of internal security and stability” (Lavenex, 2001: 26).

In the aftermath of 9/11, the need for national security grew substantially as both states and citizens believe that this is crucial for maintaining societal stability, as well as their cultural identities (Greenhill, 2016). This has resulted in public and political discourses in the EU targeting and stereotyping Muslim populations as security risks and potential ‘terrorists’ (EUMC, 2005; Kalmar, 2018; Pickel & Öztürk, 2021). Consequently, all the people that have been arriving on the shores of Europe are now considered a liability rather than refugees who require protection and assistance (Greenhill, 2016). Hence, migration and ethnic diversity continue to be debated primarily on the basis of national security (Bourne, 2007; Erel, 2007; Stan, 2016).

This shift in focus is reflected also in the EAM by means of the second pillar, which is devoted entirely to border management by saving lives and securing external borders (EC, 2015). In concrete terms, it calls upon identifying risk trends and making better usage of IT technology in order to maximise the operational effectiveness of the EU’s border management as a whole (EC, 2015). At the same time, this would “enhance Europe’s capacity to reduce irregular migration and return irregular migrants” (EC, 2015: 11), whilst “facilitating crossings for the large majority of ‘bona fide’ third country travellers” (EC, 2015: 11). Ultimately, the goal is to encourage more secure EU borders, but also support Northern African countries by reinforcing their capacity to intervene and save migrant lives (EC, 2015).

Apart from the highly striking technological and inhuman tone—considering it concerns a humanitarian crisis where thousands of people have lost their lives—, this pillar embodies the realist frame vis-à-vis migration policy by emphasising on a security-driven plan of action (Carrera et al., 2015). This is furthermore due to a long-term growth in nativism, i.e., a political practice aimed at protecting and/or privileging the interests of the natives within the nation-state, often in opposition to immigration (Nwabuzo & Schaefer, 2017). To wit, in order to protect their ‘native’ population, nation-states invoke immigration policies and laws on the basis of security (Mudde, 2010; Guia, 2016). With the unprecedented numbers of migrants and

refugees—many of whom are Muslim—, the need to increase the EU’s security level rose significantly, leading to the ‘securitisation of migration’ (Huysmans, 2000; Nwabuzo & Schaefer, 2017; Tausch, 2019). Consequently, by placing security and deterrence at the core of its response to the ‘migration crisis’ based on a prevailing biased perception of migrants and refugees, especially Muslims, as fundamentally threatening, the EU prioritises border management over securing human lives and rights (Greenhill, 2016; Georgi, 2019). Moreover, it promotes and enhances the already existing negative view towards those groups, which in turn encourages and deepens racist discourses, as well as exclusion (Greenhill, 2016; Nwabuzo & Schaefer, 2017; Georgi, 2019).

By doing so, border securitisation not only creates physical frontiers between the (white) EU and (non-white) migrants and refugees, but also symbolic and social boundaries (Alexander, 2012; Solomos, 2020). This can be explained by the fact that the EU has racialised immigration as an ethno-racial minority issue since the 1990s in which people of colour or ethnic minorities are excluded from belonging to the nation and, thus, are considered threats to national security (Bosworth & Trumbull, 2015; Abrego et al., 2016; Cheliotis, 2017). In consequence, “boundaries separating citizens and non-citizens of color from white citizens have brightened considerably, generating diminished formal and social citizenship for people of color” (Solomos, 2020: 62). Hence, in spite of its self-conception of being race-blind (Goldberg, 2009), the recent EU-ropean border policies—such as the EAM—do in fact stem from racist underpinnings by opposing multiculturalism in the name of security (Wood & Finlay, 2008; Redclift, 2014; Jansen, 2015; Jackson & Beswick, 2018).

Furthermore, whilst facilitating migratory movements within its own borders and hampering the entry of non-European migrants and refugees, the EU portrays and upholds an image of ‘fortress Europe’ where it is perceived as a “beleaguered “vanguard” in an otherwise dangerous world” (Isakjee et al., 2020: 8; El Tayeb, 2011). Thus, appealing to generally accepted norms and values in ‘Western civilisation’, e.g. security, allows for a more persuasive racist discourse, especially during (migration) crises (Van Dijk, 1997). In addition, these racialised EU border regimes are complemented by technology also based on race and processes of racialisation (M’charek, Schramm & Skinner, 2014; Isakjee et al., 2020). That is, the sociotechnical border management systems used in order to reach the overall goal of the second pillar of the 2015 EAM, i.e. Frontex, the Schengen Information System (SIS), Eurodac, are built around the ideas of personal identification, national identity, and otherness, and can either

facilitate, restrict or inhibit the movement of migrants and refugees (M'charek et al., 2014). Notwithstanding, the fact that the poor are profiled as 'mala fides' persons and, thus, as a risk (Guild, 2001), shows that the premise of "facilitating crossings for the large majority of 'bona fide' third country travellers" (EC, 2015: 11) would actually not be applicable to most migrants and refugees of the crisis, as the majority comes from third-world countries and is poor (M'charek et al., 2014; OECD, 2015; Global Justice, 2016).

Consequently, the 'migration crisis' has led to the commandment of "requisite strategies and tactics of absorption and insulation through which to re-domesticate racial transformations and restabilize the dominant racial politics of the hegemonic sociopolitical order" (De Genova, 2018: 1778), as it brought about major disruptions in the so-called racial state and its social order (Omi & Winant, [1986] 1994). In other words, "the production of "Europe" through the refortification of borders has become synonymous with the utter disposability of black and brown lives" (De Genova, 2018: 1779), which also relates to the concept of humanitarian government (Fassin, 2012; Mavelli, 2017). That is, in the case of the 'migration crisis', the humanitarian imperative required the EU to decide which 'worthy lives' were to be saved and which 'unworthy lives' could be left to drown in the name of security (Basaran, 2015; Mavelli, 2017).

As a result of the collective narratives of framing immigrants as a national security threat, a climate of justified acts of violence against those groups in the name of 'self-defense' was struck (Carrera et al., 2015; Dieng, 2018). Therefore, "when EU citizens today implicitly support or openly demand a restrictive expansion of the European border regime to defend their national-social privileges, they inevitably do so in a strongly racialised context, which they then reproduce" (Georgi, 2019: 109). This way, the EU border regime produces structural racism (Georgi, 2019). At the same time, the Agenda's primary focus on border controls and the return, readmission and smuggling of (irregular) migrants has pushed the Union's compliance with fundamental human rights to a second place (Carrera et al., 2015).

CHAPTER II – A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN NEED OF HUMAN RIGHTS

This chapter focuses on the second criteria of the central argument of this thesis, that is:

The four pillars of the 2015 ‘European Agenda on Migration’ as a response to the 2015 ‘migration crisis’ produce racial inequality between racial groups due to their racist foundations, as they discard human rights as a whole to be the number one priority.

According to Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, the EU’s founding values are “human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities”. Over the course of 2015/2016, however, these principles have been significantly challenged, as thousands of refugees and migrants, along with their children, have been “consigned to horrific, unnatural, premature deaths by shipwreck and drowning, often following protracted ordeals of abandonment at sea” (De Genova, 2018: 1766-1767; Nwabuzo & Schaefer, 2017). Following these human catastrophes, the maritime borders of Europe have turned into a macabre death scape of the ‘lost generation’—a term used by Caruso (2014) to refer to those who drowned (IOM, 2014; Jansen, Celikates & De Bloois, 2015; Heller & Pezzani, 2017).

Despite being generally referred to as a ‘migration’ or ‘refugee crisis’, it constitutes, first and foremost, a humanitarian catastrophe due to the unseen magnitude of the human cost, which had not presented itself in Europe since the 1930s and 40s (Borg-Barthet & Lyons, 2016; Fullerton, 2017). Notwithstanding, whilst attempting to address the crisis, the EU found itself at a crossroad trying to find a comprehensive policy amidst the conflicting national interests and internal security concerns (Blair, 2016). As a result, instead of an effective and principled response, the EU has focused predominantly on border security, emergency responses, operational measures, e.g., relocation, resettlement, return and readmission (Blair, 2016; Grigonis, 2016).

This is reflected in the EAM as the first official EU document to deal with the ‘migration crisis’ (Blair, 2016). That is, by framing immigrants, asylum-seekers and refugees predominantly as a security threat and concentrating on (border) control, the Agenda undermines not only the principle of freedom of movement, but also, and especially, the international human rights norms (Lavenex, 2001; Estevens, 2018). In the human rights

approach, the latter would be the starting point, meaning that the ‘migration crisis’ is to be dealt with by means of human rights instruments (Huysmans, 2000; Sørensen, Kleist & Lucht, 2017). The choice to opt for the security-based strategy, however, has proven to be an unjust and inhuman response to the fleeing of millions of desperate people in search for protection and human rights, as it goes against its own Treaty on European Union (1993) (Borg-Barthet & Lyons, 2016). In spite of the collective goal to prevent a repeat of what took place in the 1930s and 40s in Europe, the EU has shown little progress whilst dealing with the ‘migration crisis’ in terms of its treatment towards ‘outsiders’ (Borg-Barthet & Lyons, 2016). That is, by focusing on defending the EU from migrant ‘threats’, it has actually undermined and brushed aside its (international) human rights obligations (Borg-Barthet & Lyons, 2016).

Whereas pillar I, II and IV deal with migration from a security and an economic benefit perspective, pillar III reiterates the need for a better common asylum policy program based on mutual trust between Member States (EC, 2015; Baldwin-Edwards et al., 2019). This, in turn, would allow them to work together more effectively in terms of refugee relocation and resettlement (EC, 2015). Notwithstanding the goal to improve standards on reception conditions and asylum procedures, one can still find security purposes in the means to attain this goal, as stated in pillar III. That is, it is said to rely upon technological systems, such as systematic identification and fingerprinting, as well as biometric identifiers, in order to facilitate the EU’s asylum system (EC, 2015). These measures, nevertheless, fit perfectly into the security approach, as they also enable the Union’s border control by providing a more complete and precise registration of those entering the EU.

Moreover, the fact that three out of four pillars are not related to providing and protecting human rights in what essentially is a humanitarian crisis, only emphasizes the apparent contradiction in the self-image the EU portrays as it being a supranational unit that puts human rights at the forefront of its general agenda (Greenhill, 2016). Especially during the ‘migration crisis’, the EU has proven to be weak by hastily eschewing its communitarian commitments to liberal norms and humanitarian obligations (Greenhill, 2016). Reflected in the treatment towards all displaced people of the ‘crisis’, this reveals how much the EU’s governance is in fact imbedded with more deep-seated and long-standing problems as part of what Borg-Barthet & Lyons (2016) have called a ‘crisis of European values’. Thus, the ‘crisis’ does not necessarily lie within the mass movement of migrants and refugees, but rather with the overarching system of what constitutes the European Union and its shortcomings in the

application of European fundamental rights, humanitarian law and neighbourhood policy (Borg-Barthet & Lyons, 2016; Grigonis, 2016; Georgi, 2019).

In addition, by zeroing in on its own border control in the name of security of the Union and its Member States, the EU has simultaneously accommodated abuse in Libya, which serves as a key transit state in the central Mediterranean route (Baldwin-Edwards & Lutterbeck, 2019; Baldwin-Edwards et al., 2019). That is, whilst a significant number of migrants has stranded in Libya and thus are in need of international protection, the EAM has lacked any measurement in order to obtain certain authority to exert influence in a country where the EU knowingly has none (Baldwin-Edwards & Lutterbeck, 2019; Baldwin-Edwards et al., 2019). As a consequence, it allows for—or at least does not actively intervene in—the three competing Libyan governments with access to extensive militia and recent histories of extreme abuse and violence towards migrants to continuously do so (Baldwin-Edwards et al., 2019). Even migrants and refugees who are intercepted at sea are required to disembark back in Libya, despite knowing that it will most likely result in them being detained, tortured and/or raped, which is also a breach of the principle of non-*refoulement* under international human rights law (Martin, 2014; Amnesty International, 2017; Georgi, 2019).

As a consequence, the security of the state, i.e. the EU, comes before the security of the migrant, which indirectly equals the endorsement of human rights violations in the name of national security (Browning & McDonald, 2011; Baldwin-Edwards et al., 2019). The fact that it also cooperates with non-EU countries that do not lawfully guarantee the human rights of migrants and refugees, shows how the EU undermines the human security of those who actually need it the most (Sørensen et al., 2017). Furthermore, when analysing the European border regime more closely in relation to the deadly consequences it has had and continues to have on migrants, the issue of racism comes into play. That is, as a result of the security-based apparatus, the conditions for possible mass migrant deaths have been systematically generated and multiplied in such a way that irregular migrants and refugees are exposed to lethal risks (De Genova, 2018). Since this regime is predominantly disproportionate for those who come from sub-Saharan African countries, it can be considered as racist, especially when invoking Gilmore's (2007) definition of racism as “(...) the state-sanctioned or extralegal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death” (p. 28).

This being said, the overarching EU border management, along with the ‘un-European’ violence it has given rise to, has affected all (unwelcome) third world migrants whose lives and bodies in turn are deemed disposable simply because they are non-white and thus, non-European (Yildiz et al., 2016). Hence, the racialisation of migrants and refugees in light of the ‘crisis’ re-confirms the fact that the EU’s integration project has been and continues to be directed to the re-institutionalisation of a ‘European apartheid’ as anticipated by Balibar ([1999] 2004) (Yildiz et al., 2016). More so, “if the universalistic ideal of humanity is founded upon the European, white model, it will simply not be possible for the Others that human rights seek to protect to gain entrance to that community of individuals” (Lentin, 2004: 440). In other words, calling upon human rights and protection measures in order to argue for the rights of those who are racialised, relates to what Lorde ([1984] 2007) refers to as how “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” (p. 112). Consequently, the racialisation of the Other—in this case third world migrants and refugees—determines whether or not human rights are invoked (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2018).

What this shows, is that the state prioritises the protection and wellbeing of its own citizens at the expense of the human rights of those on the move (Zapata-Barrero & Gabrielli, 2017). This state-based security doctrine, however, has not been limited to national borders of individual EU Member States, but has been adopted on a supranational level by the EU by means of the EAM (Hawke, 2015). This way, the EU not only shows its support for this approach when taken upon by Member States, it also publicly manifests its own preference thereof during a humanitarian crisis. In addition, following the perception that “migration is, first and foremost, a negative externality to be mitigated, rather than an exercise in the fulfilment of constitutional obligations” (Borg-Barthet & Lyons, 2016: 233), the EU paradoxically rejects its own principles of solidarity and the rule of law as it is perceived a threat to European culture, society, identity and security (Borg-Barthet & Lyons, 2016; Dieng, 2018). This pro-national sovereignty/border control policy not only dehumanises migrants and refugees and denies them their basic rights, it also deliberately disguises its racist and national connotations by treating them as second-class citizens, whilst promoting the supremacy of the opposing group (Dieng, 2018). Consequently, right-wing EU populist parties have gained more ground and power, leading the way for even more potent racist discourses and violence towards migrants and refugees (Dieng, 2018).

CHAPTER III – RISE OF RIGHT-WING POPULIST PARTIES

This chapter focuses on the third and final criteria of the central argument of this thesis, that is:

The four pillars of the 2015 ‘European Agenda on Migration’ derive from racist foundations as they are the result of right-wing populist parties in the EU successfully pushing for a more repressive EU refugee policy.

Considering how the EAM prioritises national security over European solidarity and human rights, one could determine that the responsibility lies mainly with EU right-wing populist parties gaining more ground during the ‘migration crisis’ (Lentin, 2004; Greenhill, 2016). That is, these political parties managed to press forward their populist rhetoric and grow their political support by taking advantage of the increasing social dissatisfaction towards their government’s public policies amongst its citizens (Maldini & Takahashi, 2017; Algan, Guriev, Papaioannou & Passari, 2018). As a result, right-wing parties engaged in populist debates by not only portraying migrants and refugees merely as a threat to their culture, national identity and economy, but also as the sole party responsible of all domicile problems (Steinmayr, 2017; Algan et al., 2018). This, in turn, invigorated isolationist, ethnocentric and nationalist discourses driven by fear of (massive numbers of) foreigners, i.e. xenophobia, and Muslims, i.e. islamophobia (Maldini & Takahashi, 2017; Schain, 2018).

As right-wing forces were booking electoral successes by combining fierce nationalism with welfare chauvinism, racism in Europe has become more open, militant and aggressive (Georgi, 2019; Cinpoes & Norocel, 2020). Although it does not take the form of ‘pure racism’, it is nonetheless expressed in relation to other dynamics of oppression (Georgi, 2019), e.g. the Agenda’s border control in the name of security and the neglect of human rights. In this way, European nationalism prevails as “those arriving on Europe’s shores are not viewed as refugees in need of protection and assistance but rather a liability to national security, societal stability and cultural identity (...)” (Greenhill, 2016: 323). At the same time, this has weakened the idea of an ‘EU’rope without internal borders (Lavenex, 2001; Estevens, 2018). When taking all of this into account, a clear link can be established to the prioritisation of EU/national security over human rights protection in the EAM’s four pillars. That is, the fact that the entire Agenda focuses on the realist security paradigm, whilst disregarding human rights, is not only

proof of the right-wing populist parties' victory, but also of the power and influence they can now legitimately invoke post-implementation.

What is striking, however, is that in the post-World Wars era, Europe constructed a security identity out of fear of a revival of extreme nationalism, racism and xenophobic discourses, as they led to the destabilisation of its domestic and political spaces in the first half of the 20th century (Wæver, 1996; Huysmans, 2000). This identity even included the politicisation of a multicultural and non-racist Europe in order to prevent the past from repeating itself (Wæver, 1996; Huysmans, 2000). Yet, in light of the 'migration crisis', the EU knowingly adopted a EAM on the basis of measures that could only result in the rekindling and further strengthening of such reactions, which it clearly has (Nwabuzo & Schaefer, 2017; Deardorff Miller, 2018). The only logical explanation would be that the fear of non-white migrants and refugees and them inhabiting their territory is greater than the fear of extreme nationalism, racism and xenophobia (Delanty, 2008; Benedicto & Brunet; 2018). In other words, the EU has no problem endorsing those harmful and fragmenting ideologies and attitudes towards non-Europeans as long as it is to protect its own people and borders. Thus, the only difference is that now it is done *by* the EU rather than done *to* it.

Moreover, by 'Europeanising' the EAM, such as the EAM, the EU enhances the idea that they are not part of the European community, e.g. by means of the EAM, nor will they be any time soon (Huysmans, 2000; Thielemann, 2001; Buonanno, 2017). As Huysmans (2000) puts it, "[i]t is a policy that confirms nationalist and xenophobic positions and to that extent undermines the initiatives for the institutionalization of a more inclusive multicultural Europe which would provide extensive political, economic and social rights to immigrants" (p. 766). Even though Miles (1994) and Wieviorka (1994) have rightfully pointed out that each Member State experiences different racist practices and therefore, we cannot assume that the EU integration process leads to one specific form of racism that is inherent to all Member States, Huysmans (2000) argues that there is nevertheless a connection between EU migration policy, and racism and xenophobia, albeit indirect. That is, by concentrating on restrictions and border control, it upholds the negative image of migrants, which, in turn, sustains public expressions of racism (Sivanandan, 1990; Pieterse, 1991) and xenophobia (Huysmans, 2000; Deardorff Miller, 2018). The EAM is yet another good example hereof, as it does precisely so, i.e. prioritise national security over anything, even human rights.

Accordingly, as the ‘migration crisis’ generated debates on the EU’s foundations in relation to its social and cultural identity, race has become part of the everyday discussions, both positively and negatively (Erel, Murji & Nahaboo, 2016). The belief in the existence of ‘Europeanness’—inherent only to some—and thus, a single history of European civilisation and identity (Asad, 2003), has precipitated a sense of superiority towards non-Europeans, especially migrants and refugees of colour and/or Muslims (Bonnett, 2000; De Genova, 2018). Notwithstanding,

“[i]t is indeed this homogenized civilizational and identitarian *Europeanism* that riddles the “European” project with the incontrovertible contradictions of its own (post-)coloniality. Indeed, it is precisely this agonistic project of re-stabilizing a “European” identity that requires a fatuous discourse of “European values,” which in fact serves no other end than to re-inscribe and re-affirm “the differences between ‘them’ and ‘us’” (Yildiz et al., 2016: 35).

As a consequence, the (racialised) ‘Other’ is used, yet again, by nativists in order to reinvent and further promote the European identity (Van Dijk, 1997; Nwabuzo & Schaefer, 2017). This racist rhetoric invokes the assumption of supposedly general values that only belong to ‘their’ civilisation, which results in the alleged deviance of all non-Europeans, such as migrants, refugees, Muslims (Van Dijk, 1997; De Genova, 2018). In addition,

“(…) [a]midst the current proliferation of these self-satisfied ideological narratives of “European” culture, civilization, values, and identity, the overtly racist outrages of neo-fascist / far-right populisms merely make explicit and blunt the delicate matter of the inextricability of *any* Europeanism from the propagation of “European”-ness as a formation of racial whiteness, even as it emphatically dissimulates race in favor of ostensibly “cultural” or “civilizational” constructions of difference, and above all, in most prominent opposition at present to those “values” cynically attributed to “Muslims” (Yildiz et al., 2016: 36).

In other words, by developing the EAM on the basis of the racialisation of non-European ‘Others’, the EU upholds the ideological and epistemological pillars of anti-migrant groups (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2018; Isakjee et al., 2020). The continuous portrait of migrants and refugees as a ‘problem’ helps to fortify the oppression forces by consistently posing the question: what should *we*, i.e. Europe, do with *them*? (De Genova, 2018). The answer to this strongly objectified logic is then expressed by means of government measures, such as restrictions, management devices and border control, and administrative categories, e.g. refugee

or asylum seeker, which are also included in the EAM (Apetroe, 2016; Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2018). The only ‘requirement’ is that “(...) the dominant group believes in the menace of the cultural tenets and practices of the other group” (Cox cited in Bell-Fialkoff, 1999: 48). That is, it is not about migrants and refugees posing an actual threat to EU security, culture or livelihood, but whether or not they are *perceived* as fundamentally threatening by individuals and groups who oppose their arrival and acceptance (Greenhill, 2016).

In line with the argument based on the differentiation between ‘them’ and ‘us’, multiculturalism is considered a cause of societal disintegration of the home culture (Huysmans, 2000; Lentin & Titley, 2012). As a consequence, migration supposedly constitutes one of the main reasons for the weakening of national tradition and societal homogeneity, i.e. western civilisation (Huysmans, 2000; Mikelatou & Arvanitis, 2019). This belief is, however, not limited to extreme right-wing populist parties of individual EU countries. The EU itself participates in this process and thus, is accountable thereof (Huysmans, 2000; Jansen, 2013; IOM, 2019). As the EAM is centred around the security paradigm, the EU indirectly gives rise to racist and xenophobic discourses and attitudes towards migrants and refugees (Ratković, 2017; Deardorff Miller, 2018). Therefore, in spite of not actively constructing a form of racism that is spread across the European countries, the EU does promote a nationalist desire for a culturally homogeneous society by emphasising the need to integrate immigrants, whilst at the same time blaming them as the main reason for the unsuccessful realisation thereof (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1992, 1998; Huysmans, 2000; Keskinen, Skaptadóttir & Toivanen, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Is it truly an Agenda *on* Migration or rather an Agenda *against* migration? This dubiety led to the central question of this thesis: are the four pillars of the European Agenda on Migration based on racist foundations? And if so, how? In order to answer this question, an interpretative policy analysis of the EAM vis-à-vis race was carried out on the basis of Bhatt's 'alterity' approach. On completion of this research, one can conclude that this thesis has in fact shown the EAM to be based on racist foundations and hence, is a racist policy in the context of Kendi's (2019) definition, as it produces and sustains racial inequality between racial groups, in this case, Europeans versus migrants and refugees.

The main reason thereof is the realist security paradigm which is proven to predominate in the overarching rationale behind the EAM. Considering how security, border control and defense strategies were already at the forefront of what became the European Union in the 1990s, it is in no way odd that these ideas have prevailed and remained important throughout the 21st century, especially during and after the 'migration crisis'. The main focus on border control and the strengthening of those through technological apparatus is present in every pillar of the EAM—so much so that it neglects what should be the number one priority, namely human rights. In other words, by securitising migration on the basis of colonial ideas of the 'white' being superior to non-white races, the EU, as well as the EAM, helps to maintain the social construct of alterity. That is, migrants and refugees are categorised as the 'other' that is not welcome in *our* 'civilised, white fortress Europe', because they are perceived as a threat to European society, culture and identity. Accordingly, the EU has opted for a rather inhuman way of dealing with the 'migration crisis' by putting national security over the protection of human rights, whilst allowing right-wing populist parties to gain more ground and influence.

As a result, it has not only paved the way for racist and xenophobic discourses and attitudes to become more potent, it is also responsible for implementing a migration policy based on the same dangerous, nationalist and selfish ideas that cannot but produce and sustain racial inequality. For this exact same reason, it is important to continue analysing EU policies more critically, especially in the context of race and racism, as it is impossible for the EU to combat racism when it indirectly nurtures and upholds it. Thus, instead of blaming migrants and refugees for involuntarily leaving their countries to be safe, we should be more concerned with the EU enabling racist and xenophobic discourses, as that is where the *real* crisis lies.

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² The published article includes this typo

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