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Practice what you preach. A historical analysis of migration and development narratives in the partnership between the African and European Union

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Practice what you preach.

**A historical analysis of migration and development
narratives in the partnership between the African
and European Union**

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Bachelor Thesis



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INTRODUCTION

In the Western world, there are few phenomena that evoke as many vivid images and intense emotions as migration does. African people travelling long distances on foot or boats overpacked with people crossing the Mediterranean are regularly featured in the media and frequently referenced by politicians. Reality, however, is more complex than these simplistic and dramatized narratives of African migration. Most African migrants move within the continent. Sensationalized views of Africa as a ‘continent on the move’ are debunked by existing data (Flahaux & de Haas, 2016), and South-to-North migration is a fraction compared to intra-African movement and should not be overstated (Klavert, 2011).

The turn of this century marked important developments for cooperation between the African and European Union on migration and development. The formal creation of the African Union (AU) in 2002 led the European Union (EU) to establish a strategic partnership between the two continents. A renewed emphasis emerged on Africa as an EU geopolitical priority (Holland & Doidge, 2012). Relations between the AU’s predecessor and the EU were formally initiated at their first joint summit in Cairo (2000) and have been further established over the past 22 years through six more joint summits.

Though the AU and EU have increased their cooperation, the extent to which their joint efforts can be defined as a ‘partnership’ is subject to debate. The AU and EU have aimed to address a variety of migration dynamics, from tackling ‘root causes’ of migration, to harnessing the developmental effects migration can foster. Research on the migration-development nexus challenged assumptions that migration was a result of development failure (Bakewell, 2008), showing that development does not reduce migration as previously thought. Development rather initially fosters migration, for people need a minimum of means to migrate, and improvements in income will typically increase people’s aspirations and capabilities to migrate (de Haas, 2010).

AU-EU cooperation has thus increased, but it seems that their individual interests do not converge around migration and development. How can we view increased efforts to cooperate on migration and development policy, if aims do not converge? When and where do AU and EU interests converge? The research question this thesis will answer is therefore the following:

How have migration and development narratives of the African and the European Union developed against a background of increasing cooperation between both organizations?

In order to examine the concerted efforts of the AU and EU, we must look at both the joint and individual narratives on migration that high level political elites within these organizations employ to problematize, define and mobilize certain political decisions (Ransan-Cooper et al., 2015). As narratives play an essential role in the negotiation of EU migration policies (Schöfberger, 2019), a critical discourse analysis comparing narratives in joint AU-EU summit with individual documents on migration will be able to distinguish patterns and describe historical trends.

In this way, this thesis contributes to research on historical relations between political organizations and the evolution of policy narratives on migration and development over time. It also aims to nuance the debate on asymmetric relations between the AU and EU to show the power of narratives. Studying the so-far under-researched AU, this thesis attempts to go further than an analysis of the EU and include the AU as an equal actor in this partnership. The analysis confirms existing literature theorizing the usage of crisis frames as ‘narrative devices’ to define issues (Benford & Snow, 2000; de Haas, 2005; Schöfberger, 2019). In addition, the analysis shows that the mobilization of and commitment to specific narratives shifts from more optimistic narratives to more pessimistic narratives on migration and development depending on historical context. Furthermore, this shift depends on which organization is seen to emerge as a ‘loser’ from current events. It thus seems that the ability to portray the organization as disfavored by current conditions is key to steer the joint narrative in a direction that is favorable to the perceived loser.

This thesis is structured as follows: first, a theoretical framework of the literature on AU-EU relations, the link between migration and development and hypotheses of narratives are presented. Next, the selection of the AU and EU and the deployment of a critical discourse analysis is explained, along with the coding schemes. I then analyze the evolution of narratives on migration and development within a historical context of continuing AU-EU relations. To finish, a conclusion will be provided including a recognition of the limitations of this thesis as well as its implications for academia and society.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The following sections provide an overview of the literature on EU-AU relations, describes the link between migration and development and underlines the importance of assessing narratives on migration and development to trace historical patterns and recognize themes. Finally, the hypotheses are presented.

An overview of AU-EU relations

The turn of this century marked the beginning of multiple developments within the field of migration and development. First, the EU made efforts to cooperate on migration with third countries. As a consequence of the Schengen Agreement (1995), the organization was looking to expand cooperation on migration to safeguard its external borders (Schöfberger, 2019). This wish was partly fulfilled by the initiation of the Africa-EU Partnership in 2000, at the first Africa-EU Summit in Cairo. Two years later, the African Union was established. Throughout the years, AU-EU cooperation has deepened through multiple types of regular formal dialogue, of which the triennial joint summits are the highest-level political meetings. Multiple frameworks for cooperation have been established, of which the Joint Africa-EU strategy (2007) is the partnership's most ambitious political commitment (Kotsopoulos, 2007). In addition to the regular joint summits, the Unions met in 2015 for a thematic summit on migration in Valetta, in light of the 'migration crisis' of that same year. The organizations have thus been engaged in a partnership on issues in relation with but not limited to migration for quite some time.

Though AU-EU cooperation has increased, the extent to which their joint efforts can be defined as a 'partnership' is subject to debate. With time, the AU has gained influence on the African continent, though activities have mostly been limited to the advancement and adoption of agreements (Touray, 2016). Despite AU efforts to move away from reliance on donor funding the organization remains dependent on international donors (Sow, 2016), including the EU, for 61% of its budget (African Union, 2022). This has made it difficult for the AU to conduct relations as an equal partner rather than a beneficiary (European Commission, 2022a; van Crieking & Carbone, 2013). The EU's position has remained strong as they continue to be the African continent's largest trade partner (Eurostat, 2022) as well as its largest partner in official development assistance (European Commission, 2022b). Moreover, some scholars argue that this budget support is aimed at purposes of development but leveraged towards other

ends, such as economic liberalization (Langan, 2015), and more importantly through the EU's framing of aid as an instrument to address migration (Zaun & Nantermoz, 2022).

The migration-development nexus: ongoing debate and a securitizing tendency

Until the beginning of the 21st century, scholarly and policy debates on migration and development went back and forth between pessimistic and optimistic views (de Haas, 2010). Pessimistic views argued migration to be detrimental to development. These views theorized migration as contributing to more underdevelopment, caused by the deepening of inequalities and brain drain (Castles, 2009; de Haas, 2010). On the other hand, optimists viewed migration as being beneficial to development. Positive effects of remittances, the transfer of skills and attitudes, and the role of migrant diasporas to transfer resources and ideas were emphasized (Castles, 2009, p. 14).

This classical opposition between pessimist and optimist views was then challenged by empirical evidence pointing at the diversity of effects migration has on development (de Haas, 2010, p. 241). The relation between migration and development is more nuanced and best described as reciprocal. Since the 1990s, many migration scholars agree that development is initially likely to foster migration (Castles, 2009; de Haas, 2007; Geiger & Pécoud, 2013; Nyberg-Sørensen et al., 2002). To migrate, people need a minimum of means. Development means that people's income, education and access to information and networks increase, which in turn raises people's aspirations and capabilities to migrate (Flahaux & de Haas, 2016). Emigration thus initially increases with development, to eventually decrease at higher development levels following the 'migration transition theory' (de Haas, 2010; Skeldon, 2012; Zelinsky, 1971 as cited in Bakewell, 2008).

Regardless of broad academic consensus on the above-mentioned dynamic, a contrary narrative of development as preventing migration is still used in policy circles (Martin and Taylor, 1996; Massey, 1991 as cited in Geiger & Pécoud, 2013, p. 370). According to Castles, this incorrect belief is based on two assumptions, 1) on colonial ideas that migration of poor people to wealthy destinations is intrinsically bad, and 2) that poverty and violence force people to move and that by tackling these issues, less migration will follow (2009, p.16). The persistence of the above-mentioned view reflects a broader tendency in the research literature to cast 'South-North' migration as a symptom of development failure (Bakewell, 2008). This is based on the common misconception that poverty and income gaps between poor and rich countries are the 'root causes' of migration (de Haas, 2007).

At the same time, crisis events such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York and the 2015 ‘migration crisis’ have also influenced debates on migration policy (Boin et al., 2009) by adding security concerns in the mix (Deridder et al., 2020; Nyberg–Sørensen et al., 2002). These crises may act as ‘policy windows’, which allow political actors to use the increased attention for certain problems to their advantage and connect specific and favorable solutions (Boin et al., 2009). In this way, a crisis frame can act as a ‘narrative device’, or a tool to define a certain issue (Benford & Snow, 2000; de Haas, 2005; Schöfberger, 2019). Assessments of the influence of migration on development have thus differed throughout the years, depending on the historical moment and circumstances (de Haas, 2005; Nyberg–Sørensen et al., 2002, p. 2). This variation in views has been reflected in the mobilization of different narratives, which will be elaborated after a conceptualization of narratives.

The role of narratives in a ‘partnership’

Though the Unions share interests in cooperating in the field of migration, their priorities differ and therefore they mobilize different narratives to place emphasis on certain aspects of migration. Narratives are products of social and historical conditions and are shaped by political processes and negotiations. Within social sciences, a useful definition is provided by Hinchman and Hinchman (1997), who stress three characteristics. First, narratives are chronological, for they represent sequences of events, second, they are meaningful, and third, they are at their core social because they are produced for a specific audience (Hinchman & Hinchman, 1997).

Within the study of policymaking, a narrative and framing approach questions how different ways of looking at existing processes influence the manner in which issues are processed, how they affect which interests play a role during policymaking and negotiations and what type of political configurations and results are likely to come out of this process (Daviter, 2007). The difference between narratives and framing is that the latter is a broader term encompassing narratives, whereas narratives do not refer to the entire process of framing, but mainly capture the issue definition and foreclosing of policy options (Daviter, 2007, p. 663).

Although researching the evolution of narratives on migration and development against a historical background would benefit from a complete framing analysis, in this thesis the focus will mainly be on the evolution of narratives themselves and the context surrounding changes or non-changes in such narratives. Political narratives on migration in particular tend to be simplistic and dramatized, as this increases their chance of being echoed by mass media and then resonating with the public (Boswell, 2011, p. 18). This type of narrative may “short-circuit” the complexity of the social structure it aims to control, but is most likely to persist in

highly political areas such as that of migration control (Boswell, 2011, p. 18). Furthermore, in politically complex and ambiguous settings, like the AU-EU joint summits, building coalitions is often dependent on the narrative frame that is placed on the issues at hand (Fligstein, 2001). This is important, because it means that narratives are a means to exercise discursive power for those who do not have funds to use as leverage.

From the start of the partnership, the AU has mobilized optimistic narratives, emphasizing the importance of legal migration and the facilitation of remittance flows (Berger, 2022; Delgado-Wise & Castles, 2007; Diallo, 2020; van Criekinge & Carbone, 2013). Migration does not however, rank particularly high on AU member states’ agendas (van Criekinge & Carbone, 2013). In fact, migration is generally not perceived as a problem, but as a fact of life, which means it is less of a priority in the face of broader challenges the continent faces (Knoll & de Weijer, 2016). Contrary to the AU member states’ agendas, migration ranks as one of the highest issues on EU member states’ agendas, which has shaped the EU’s ambitious efforts (Diallo, 2020; Hampshire, 2016; Lavenex & Kunz, 2008; Nyberg–Sørensen et al., 2002). The EU’s position on migration and development has been subject to changes between more optimistic and more pessimistic narratives, from recognizing migration as a tool for development to perceiving migration as a security threat for which development funds can be used (van Criekinge & Carbone, 2013). Subject to member states’ pressures, development funds have been instrumentalized to attain migration and security policy goals, which is translated into a securitizing tendency of development (Lavenex & Kunz, 2008; Orbie & Versluys, 2009, as cited in Siitonen, 2022).

Hypotheses around migration and development narratives

What emerges from the existing literature are multiple categorizations of narratives. There is consensus around the existence of two main competing narrative frames: one which conceptualizes migration in development terms, and another which defines migration through a security lens (Boswell et al., 2011; Deridder et al., 2020; Knoll & de Weijer, 2016; Lavenex & Kunz, 2008; Nyberg–Sørensen, 2012; Ransan-Cooper et al., 2015; Teye, 2022). In addition, other narratives can be identified. Often, they are not mutually exclusive and exist simultaneously or are combined in various ways. Yet, the relative emphasis each narrative receives is likely to differ significantly. Below, five narratives on migration and development are identified. The first four emerge from the literature, whereas the fifth narrative is based on identifying migration and development as a key area for cooperation between the AU and EU and is therefore specific to the objective of this thesis.

The first narrative is the interpretation of migration as a security threat to socio-economic welfare and to cultural survival (Carling & Hernández-Carretero, 2011; Knoll & de Weijer, 2016; Teye, 2022). It is based on the idea that migrants bring instability and security risks. The objective behind this narrative is to reduce migrant flows through migration management strategies that often focus on irregular migration, smuggling and border management. Within this narrative, migrants are associated with terrorism and organized crime networks. A consequence of the use of this narrative could be an instrumentalization of development funds to curb migration flows.

A second narrative defines migration as a symptom of poverty. In this narrative, 'root causes' such as poverty, conflict, institutional problems, and economic gaps between poor and wealthy countries are considered push factors of migration (Berger, 2022; Knoll & de Weijer, 2016; Schöfberger, 2019; Teye, 2022; Zaun & Nantermoz, 2022). The way to control migration is therefore to tackle 'root causes'. Development funds are mobilized to implement poverty reduction measures, to create employment so people stay employed locally (and thus do not migrate), and to strengthen institutions.

The third main narrative describes migration as a strategy for long-term development and an opportunity for better livelihoods (Knoll & de Weijer, 2016; Schöfberger, 2019; Teye, 2022; van Crieking & Carbone, 2013). Following this narrative, the main goal is to reap migration's developmental impact while minimizing potential negative effects. This can be achieved by creating more possibilities for legal migration, by removing barriers to the sending and receiving of remittances and by effectively engaging the diaspora in development policy.

A fourth narrative casts migration as a humanitarian issue (Knoll & de Weijer, 2016; Teye, 2022). This narrative depicts migrants as extremely vulnerable people whose human rights need to be protected under international law. Migrants are seen as victims of smuggling, human trafficking, and abuse, with little agency. The goal of this narrative is to ensure decent and rights-based protection, which will be realized through rescue missions, humanitarian aid and the enhancing of livelihood opportunities for refugee populations (Knoll & de Weijer, 2016, p. 13). At the same time, this narrative can be mobilized not only as a policy objective, but also to justify control measures (Carling & Hernández-Carretero, 2011), such as more restrictive border policy and more investment in border security agencies such as the EU's Frontex.

The fifth narrative is especially important for this thesis. Migration and development are key areas for cooperation between the AU and EU. Despite that, the topic of migration does not rank high on the AU agenda, while it remains of high priority for the EU (Diallo, 2020; Hampshire, 2016; Lavenex & Kunz, 2008; Nyberg-Sørensen et al., 2002; van Crieking &

Carbone, 2013). For cooperation on migration and development to continue, a narrative must be mobilized which reiterates the importance of cooperation and dialogue on migration and development.

Following this review of AU-EU relations, the migration-development nexus, and the identification of five narratives, a few elements have been unpacked. The evolution of narratives between the AU and EU remains undetermined. Cooperation between the AU and EU has increased, and though they share interests in the field of migration and development, their priorities diverge, and their capabilities differ. To determine which narratives are mobilized in joint narratives, the Unions' respective discursive power must be assessed and placed in its historical context. As a result of this review, I expect to find support for the following hypotheses in the analysis:

H₁: In AU documents, migration as a strategy for long-term development narratives will be dominant, while security threat narratives will be least mobilized. The partnership narrative will be mobilized less by the AU.

H₂: In EU documents, narratives which justify the securitization of migration such as a security threat narrative and a humanitarian issue narrative will be dominant, while strategy for long-term development narratives will be least mobilized. The partnership narrative will be mobilized more by the EU.

H₃: In joint documents, partnership and humanitarian narratives will be mobilized as this is where AU-EU interests converge. The mobilization of security threat, symptom of poverty and strategy for long-term development narratives will depend on current events and whether this calls for a prioritization of one narrative over another.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This section discusses the selection of the AU and EU as cases, as well as the selection of joint summit declarations and individual organizations' migration policy documents to be used for a critical discourse analysis (CDA) to trace narratives on migration and development.

Case selection

Within existing studies on regional organizations, the AU has not yet been studied much (Haastrup, 2020), nor has the AU-EU Partnership. To recognize the AU's increasing role as an important player on the African continent and to develop a historical account of their partnership, the AU and the EU are chosen as units of analysis. The partnership between the AU and the EU is a unique case, as there are few partnerships between organizations of their size, representing the interests of this many people, that convene regularly and that set out ambitious policy on migration and development together. A possible parallel could be the partnership between Mexico, the United States and Canada in the NAFTA framework. However, NAFTA involves cooperation between nation-states whereas the AU-EU partnership concerns cooperation between regional organizations. Therefore, it is doubtful whether NAFTA indeed constitutes an adequate point of comparison. Following this line of thinking, the universe of cases out of which one can select is limited to this partnership between the AU and the EU. Even more importantly, the objective of this thesis is not to be able to generalize findings. It is instead to examine how narratives on migration and development between these two political organizations have developed over time against a background of their changing historical relations. This thesis will do so through a CDA of both key joint productions and individual documents: the latter will function to determine each organization's individual position on migration and development.

Data collection

In order to find out how migration and development narratives have developed against a background of increasing AU-EU cooperation, joint declarations and related strategies following AU-EU joint summits will be systematically analyzed. At these joint summits, political leaders of both organizations negotiate on the future of the partnership and the actions to be undertaken in the field of migration and development. Of the various types of formal dialogues which establish the AU-EU partnership, these joint summits have been selected to analyze joint narratives as these are politically the most high-profile. I gathered 15 released

declarations and related strategies of all 7 AU-EU Joint Summits, including the special Valletta Summit on Migration.

To determine the development of individual narratives, the AU and EU's migration positions will be analyzed as detailed in their respective African Common Position (2006, 2019) and Global Approach (2011) and its successor, the New Pact (2020). Admittedly, both organizations and especially the EU have produced more documents detailing their policy on migration. Even so, many of these are technical documents which do not primarily serve political purposes; hence they are not fit for a CDA which seeks to trace narratives. The additional 4 documents used for analysis were found via the websites of the AU [<https://au.int>] and EU [<https://ec.europa.eu>]. An overview of all documents subject to analysis is provided in the tables below.

Table 1: Overview of joint summits between the AU and EU (2000-2022)

Name meeting	Year	Location	Name document
1st Africa-Europe Summit	2000	Cairo, Egypt	1. Cairo Declaration 2. Cairo Plan of Action
2nd EU-Africa Summit	2007	Lisbon, Portugal	3. Lisbon Declaration 4. Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) 5. JAES Action Plan (2007-2010)
3rd Africa-EU Summit	2010	Tripoli, Libya	6. Tripoli Declaration 7. JAES Action plan (2011-2013)
4th EU-Africa Summit	2014	Brussels, Belgium	8. Brussels Declaration 9. Brussels Roadmap 10. EU-Africa Declaration on Migration and Mobility
Valletta Summit on Migration	2015	Valletta, Malta	11. Valletta Declaration 12. Valletta Action Plan
5th AU-EU Summit	2017	Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire	13. Abidjan Declaration 14. Joint statement on the migrant situation in Libya
6th EU-AU Summit	2022	Brussels, Belgium	15. Joint Vision for 2030

Table 2: Overview of individual documents on migration of the AU and EU

Organization	Year	Name document
African Union	2006	1. African Common Position on Migration and Development
	2019	2. Common African Position (CAP) on the global compact for safe, orderly and regulatory migration
European Union	2011	3. The renewed Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM)
	2020	4. New Pact on Migration and Asylum

Method of data analysis

Both individual and joint narratives are analyzed to test the hypotheses formulated in the theoretical framework. The AU and the EU have unequal political and economic capital and this inequality will reflect on their different bargaining powers regarding narrative frames (Schöfberger, 2019). The degree to which parts of individual narratives are present in their joint narratives will indicate the amount of influence the AU and EU individually have on joint narratives, and this will provide insights into the extent to which their relation can be described as a ‘partnership’.

Drawing inspiration from Siitonen’s approach (2022), the task at hand is to examine the coherence between narratives used in different policy documents by exploring whether the logic of argumentation has changed over time and differs from one policy to another. In addition, identifying the emphasis on one narrative over others is essential to provide a complete account of how narratives have developed over time (Knoll & de Weijer, 2016).

There is not one single method of conducting critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Blackledge, 2013; van Dijk, 2006), as the specific approach is dependent on the subject of analysis. What is important is that language and power are central to the study, because on the one hand, unequal relations are established and reproduced through language, and on the other hand it is via language that “social asymmetries may be challenged and transformed” (Blackledge, 2013, p. 617). To nuance the debate on asymmetric relations between the AU and EU and to show the discursive power of narratives, power is indeed a crucial factor to consider. However, what frequently lacks in CDA is historical depth. The discourse-historical approach (DHA) adopted in this thesis is able to fill this gap, by asserting that discourse analysis needs to be firmly placed in its historical contexts (Blackledge, 2013; Reisigl & Wodak, 2017).

It will be central to the analysis to distinguish the five narratives as theorized in the preceding section. To do so, the following coding scheme will be used:

Table 3: Coding scheme for identifying narratives

Narrative name	Indicators
Migration as a security threat	Irregular migration, smuggling, organized crime networks, terrorism, border management, migration control, re-admission
Migration as a symptom of poverty	Root causes, poverty reduction, (un)employment, institutions, development aid, economic push-factors
Migration as a strategy for long-term development	Free movement, remittances, diaspora, legal migration, circular migration, visa arrangements, development potential, brain drain, mobility
Migration as a humanitarian issue	Human trafficking, irregular migration, rights and international law, protection, (humanitarian) assistance, rescue missions, refugees
Migration as a key area for partnership	Dialogue, partnership, cooperation, resources, funds, mutual,

The analytical strategy to compare individual and joint narratives over time will be carried out systematically by analyzing four different ‘layers’ of every document. First, the historical context in which the text has been published will be determined. Second, the frequency at which the five narratives are deployed will be counted. Third, relative emphasis is measured as the level of commitment to a specific narrative on a scale from 1 to 5. The ‘acknowledgement’ of certain issue does not warrant concrete action to be undertaken, hence it is interpreted as a low level of commitment and given a value of 1. A high level of commitment is counted as a value of 5 and is demonstrated using action verbs such as ‘committing’. Below is a table which shows the coding scheme for identifying the level of commitment.

Table 4: Coding scheme for identifying the level of commitment to a narrative

Value	Indicators
1	Acknowledge/Recognize
2	Note
3	Support/Express/Collaborate/Cooperate
4	Emphasize/Condemn/Underline the need/Affirm
5	Commit/Continue/Address

Fourth and final, the order in which the narratives on migration and development appear is also analyzed. In particular, the analysis looks at when migration and development appear in the general order of policy areas on which the AU and EU cooperate.

ANALYSIS

The findings are presented and discussed in two sections. First, positions of the AU and EU are determined through an analysis of individual policy documents. Then, the evolution of joint narratives on migration and development over the past 22 years is shown. This allows me to allude to the representation of each organization's individual interests in their joint productions.

Individual AU and EU positions

As expected, and as shown in figure 1.1, the AU's individual position is most concerned with making migration work as a strategy for development: 54,5% of all mentions are fitting this narrative. Where at first the AU still mobilized a security threat narrative (it comprised 10,5% of all mentions in 2006) this narrative has disappeared in 2019. The shift away from a security threat narrative of migration fulfills the theoretical expectations formulated and the motivations behind it are further illustrated by the following statement in the Common African Position:

“Concerned that the emphasis on addressing irregular migration has mainly been driven by security and border control considerations rather than by broader development frameworks” (African Union, 2019, p. 7, emphasis in original)

This quote reflects the AU's discontent with a continuing focus on irregular migration as opposed to a focus on the developmental impact of migration. On top of that, it shows that the AU has strengthened its optimistic position towards migration to further its own developmental interests. The AU's increasing mobilization of a symptom of poverty narrative can also be seen in this regard. Though this narrative has not been left uncontested, the definition of migration as a symptom of poverty promotes policy options which advance AU development interests. Finally, over the years the organization has increasingly recognized migration as a key area for partnership, from 5% of all mentions fitting this narrative to 21%. At first glance, this is surprising compared to the EU, where we find the inverse to be true for the EU's mobilization of the partnership narrative. Whereas this narrative made up for 33% of all mentions in 2011, this has decreased to 21% in 2020. Yet this finding is nuanced by the absolute frequencies of narratives found in the four individual documents as shown in figure 1.2. Though the proportion at which the AU and EU mobilize the partnership narrative is equal, absolute frequencies suggest the EU is, as expected, more concerned with cooperation on migration than the AU is.

Still, the EU's position is not entirely along theoretical expectations as proposed earlier. In 2011, the EU's position seems generally aligned with that of the AU in 2006, but this has

changed drastically in the EU's New Pact of 2020. While the AU's security threat narrative has disappeared, in EU policy documents, it has become more prominent, specifically through an increase from 16,7% in 2011 to 24,2% in 2020. An identical increase was seen in the share of humanitarian narratives. This is explained by the EU's explicit reference to the grave situation on Moria in its 2020 New Pact. In 2020 the Greek island of Moria appeared in the news for the wretched circumstances under which many migrants then lived and continue to live. Subject to humanitarian organizations' and the public's pressure, the EU needed to formulate political narratives which both attained security goals while still concerning itself with migrants' safety. Both the dominance of the security threat and humanitarian narrative confirm the second hypothesis. However unexpectedly, it was not the development narrative but the symptom of poverty which was least mobilized. Overall, from 2011 to 2020, an explosion of each narrative took place as seen in figure 1.2. This indicates a more general shift in EU positions, in which migration has become a higher priority on the organization's agenda.

Figure 1.1: Relative frequencies of narratives within individual documents

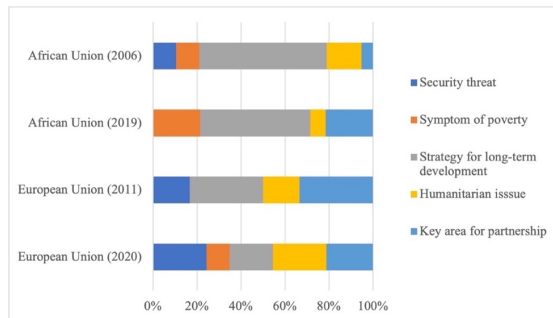
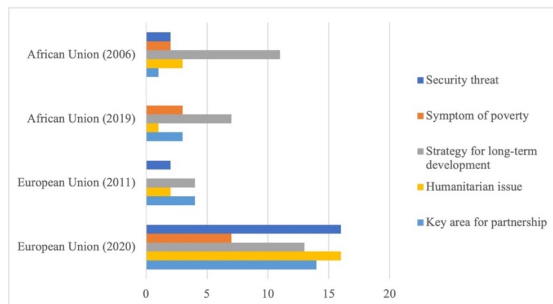


Figure 1.2: Absolute frequencies of narratives within individual documents

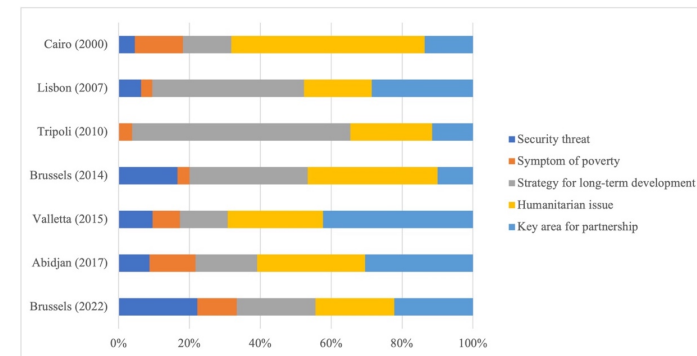


An evolution of joint AU-EU narratives on migration and development

The analysis shows that depending on historical conditions and crisis events, relative mobilization shifts from more optimistic narratives to more pessimistic narratives on migration and development. More specifically, this depends on which organization is perceived to be impacted negatively by current events. Depending on whether the AU or the EU is perceived to lose the most, joint productions will mobilize different narratives.

As can be seen in figure 2.1 below, this distribution of narratives over time in joint productions shows this shift from more optimistic narratives to more pessimistic narratives. From 2007 until 2014, the AU was perceived to have been disadvantaged, as the development potential of migration had not been paid ample attention yet. The strategy for long-term development narrative became then a key element of AU-EU productions and was mobilized most. After 2015, this narrative had become irrelevant. Simultaneously, from 2014 onwards, the security threat narrative appeared important, indicating a shift from the development narrative to the security threat narrative. This reflects the EU's success in steering narratives in their favor when the organization was seen to be losing because of the 2015 migration crisis. In this regard, the EU has been more successful than the AU. The mobilization of security threat, symptom of poverty and-development narratives thus depended on current events as theorized by the hypothesis for joint productions. Also, crisis events which threaten the survival of the AU-EU Partnership, like the 2015 migration crisis, resulted in increased mobilization of partnership narratives. This was not as expected but has allowed the organizations to legitimize the partnership regardless of their consensus on other narratives and as interests between the Unions diverge.

Figure 2.1: Relative frequencies of narratives in joint documents (2000-2022)



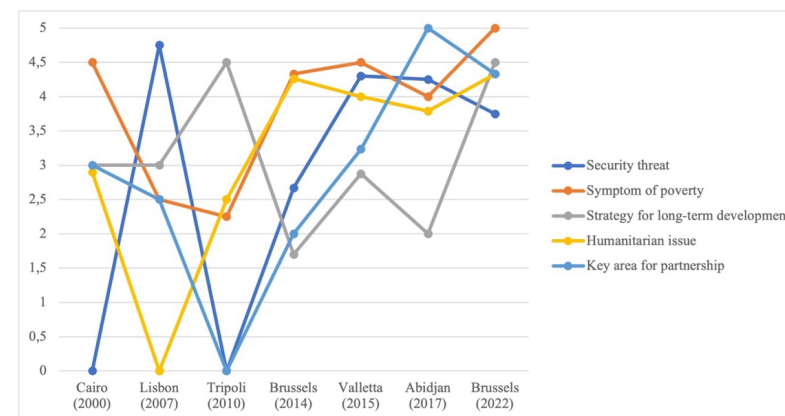
The analysis of the form and order of joint AU-EU documents has granted two insights. For the entirety of AU-EU cooperation, every official joint document has dedicated a section specifically to migration, affirming the importance of cooperation in this field. Nevertheless, the name under which these sections appear has differed. At the 1st Africa-Europe Summit in Cairo (200), migration was found under the fourth pillar of ‘Human rights, democratic principles and institutions, good governance and the rule of law’. From the 2nd EU-Africa Summit onwards, separate sections are reserved for ‘Migration and mobility’. The difference between joint documents following this first joint summit and all other summits to come, is that 1) Migration, 2) Xenophobia and 3) Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) are addressed separately. This difference can be explained by the dominance of the humanitarian narrative at the first summit, which would call for a distinction between these different aspects as it aims to ensure decent and rights-based protection (Knoll & de Weijer, 2016).

Furthermore, the order at which separate sections on migration appear has moved down. In every joint production in the first decade of cooperation, sections on migration are found at 50-60% of the entire document. From the 4th EU-Africa Summit in Brussels (2014) onwards, sections on migration have moved down to the 75-95% mark. Though migration has remained in every joint production and thus remained an area for cooperation, the moving down of migration further corroborates the emergence of diverging interests between the Unions.

The evolution of narratives in AU-EU cooperation will now be discussed chronologically to show a shift from the mobilization of optimistic to pessimistic narratives. Relations between Africa and Europe are not new, its roots go back for a long time, as they have gradually evolved from colonial arrangements to a formal strategic partnership between two organizations. The first decade after the formal start of the AU-EU partnership can be characterized by optimism, though the security threat narrative is present. First, in Cairo (2000), the organizations called themselves determined to strengthen cooperation and make it beneficial for both continents, in light of the globalization trend. They committed to strengthening already existing links of political, economic, and cultural understanding through the creation of conditions in which constructive dialogue and development could be promoted. Of the 22 instances a narrative was identified at the first Africa-EU summit, the humanitarian narrative was mobilized 54,5% of the time. At the same time, the highest level of commitment was attached to a different narrative, specifically the symptom of poverty narrative. The emphasis on this narrative can be seen as a remainder of colonial views, where Africa is characterized as a poverty-stricken continent.

A shift to optimism can be deduced when we compare the mobilization of narratives at the 1st summit in Cairo (2000) to the 2nd and 3rd Africa-EU Summit, in Lisbon (2007) and Tripoli (2010) respectively. At these summits a shift took place from a mobilization of symptom of poverty and humanitarian issue narratives to the mobilization of an optimistic narrative defining migration as a strategy for long-term development. The symptom of poverty narrative decreased in mentions from 13,6% to 3,8%, while the humanitarian narrative went from accounting for 54,5% to 23,1%, within the period between 2000-2010. The level of commitment attached to both narratives also decreased, as seen in figure 2.2 below. The development narrative instead became more mobilized, accounting for 42,9% in Lisbon (2007) and 61,5% in Tripoli (2010). The level of commitment to this narrative had also increased by the 3rd Africa-EU Summit.

Figure 2.2: Levels of commitment to specific narratives within joint documents



This change to optimism coincided with two academic and political developments. First, a renaissance occurred in the field of migration studies from 2001 onwards, where empirical evidence justifying a more positive view of migration emerged (de Haas, 2010). Second, insights on the migration-development nexus such as the understanding that development initially leads to more migration had by then become widespread knowledge. This contradicted beliefs which argued poverty drove migration and showcased the diverse relation between migration and development. The AU was able to direct joint narratives in their favor, by emphasizing the development potential of migration which was evidenced in empirical studies.

At the same time, if we solely look at the level of commitment, one might contest this proposed shift to optimism. In 2007, the highest level of commitment was attached to the security threat narrative. When we look at historical context, the reasons behind this commitment become clear. Around 2007, several events took place which made migration politically sensitive in a variety of ways. First, the terrorist attacks on the 11th of September in 2001 altered migration and security governance drastically. Second, French and Dutch citizens voted against the European Constitution, on grounds which included a discontent with a lack of EU attention for immigration (Ignacio Torreblanca & Sorroza, 2006). This gave incentive for the EU to address these citizens' concerns. Lastly, a critical situation unfolded at the border of the Spanish enclaves Ceuta and Melilla. When Sub-Saharan migrants tried to cross fences irregularly, they were met with grave violence. The absence of commitment on the humanitarian issue narrative in 2007 might suggest that the event was rather interpreted as a security threat. The high level of commitment to the security threat narrative is again nuanced, when we note that this narrative accounted for 6,3% of all mentions.

Whereas the first decade of AU-EU partnership thus observed a gradual evolution to more optimistic narratives that conceptualize migration in development terms, this trend did not persist in the second decade. Instead, the mobilization of the security threat and partnership narratives increased. As of the 4th EU-Africa Summit in Brussels (2014), the security threat narrative became more mobilized while before it was irrelevant: this narrative went from not being mobilized in 2010, to accounting for 16,7% of all mentions in 2014. Concurrently, the highest levels of commitment were placed on security threat, symptom of poverty and humanitarian issue narratives. These two developments show a switch from the development to securitizing narratives such as the security threat and humanitarian issue narratives. Tying this in with the context at the time, it is clear that anti-immigrant sentiments ran high leading up to the European Parliament elections (Wike, 2014). This sentiment might well have been reflected in negotiations between the AU and EU at their 4th Joint Summit. Furthermore, the Joint Declaration on Migration and Mobility (2014) stressing the need to combat human trafficking and provide protection for vulnerable migrants, corroborates this sentiment. In the analysis of this summit, the added value of measuring the level of commitment is demonstrated. Whereas relative frequencies indicate that the development narrative continues to be mobilized, the low level of commitment attached to this narrative shows that this narrative was least important at this summit.

From the 2015 Valletta Summit onwards, it becomes more apparent that the narrative which defines migration as a strategy for long-term development has become irrelevant. Both

the mobilization of the narrative as well as the commitment to it decrease to 13,5% in 2015 and 22,2% in 2022. Instead, mentions of the partnership narrative see an explosive increase to 42,3%. Though the joint productions at Valletta (2015) call for more cooperation and dialogue, the level of commitment to do so remains low. Between 2015 and 2017, this level of commitment has however increased enormously, as illustrated by figure 2.2. It is plausible that the Unions concluded that cooperation is necessary to achieve individual goals after the Valletta Summit. A more likely explanation is that the partnership narrative functioned as a legitimization tool to emphasize the importance of the AU-EU partnership and ensure its survival. In this sense, the migration crisis was used as a narrative device to affirm the partnership's importance. More importantly, the shift from a development narrative dominating joint documents in the first decade to securitizing narratives shows the EU's success in steering joint efforts to include narratives which are in accord with their individual position.

A surprising insight is the seeming insignificance of the symptom of poverty narrative. Although the level of commitment attached to this specific narrative has remained relatively high for the entire period in which the AU-EU Partnership has existed, the number of times the symptom of poverty narrative was mobilized remained low. The highest count is found at the first summit in Cairo (2000), where this narrative accounted for 13,6% of all narratives mobilized. This insignificance is unexpected as the instrumentalization of development funds to 'tackle root causes' of migration is identified in the theoretical framework as a prominent feature of EU migration and development policy. An explanation for this might be that the symptom of poverty narrative can also be justified by mobilizing other narratives. A development narrative, for instance, can advocate for poverty reduction measures. By mobilizing this narrative instead, AU and EU interests can converge as the AU aims to make migration work for development, and for the EU this narrative justifies similar measures foreclosed by a symptom of poverty narrative.

What seems to be true after Valletta (2015) is that the AU and EU insist on their partnership being vital for forming migration policy, even though conflicting narratives are mobilized in joint productions. The increasing commitment to the partnership narrative from 2017 onwards seems to be a way to agree on something to remain engaged in the partnership even though interests diverge.

CONCLUSION

The way in which we speak about migration and development matters. This thesis sought to contribute to research on the development of narratives on migration and development over time between political organizations. It has aimed to nuance the debate on asymmetric relations between the AU and EU. Studying the so-far under-researched AU, this thesis has attempted to go further than an analysis of the EU only and include the AU as an equal in this partnership. Through a critical discourse analysis, the following research question has been answered:

How have migration and development narratives of the African and the European Union developed against a background of increasing cooperation between both organizations?

Over the course of 22 years and 7 joint summits, narratives on migration and development have evolved in a couple of ways. In the first decade of AU-EU partnership, the analysis shows a gradual evolution to more optimistic narratives which conceptualize migration in development terms. From 2014 onwards, the development narrative becomes irrelevant. Instead, joint statements shift to mobilizing pessimistic securitizing narratives, such as the security threat and humanitarian issue narratives. From 2015 to now, cooperation continues but interests diverge, which aligns with an explosive increase in the mobilization of the partnership narrative in joint productions. This sudden increase shows the function of the partnership narrative as a legitimization tool to emphasize the importance of the AU-EU partnership and ensure its survival. In this sense, the migration crisis (2015) was used as a narrative device to affirm the partnership's importance.

Generally, findings of this thesis thus support existing literature theorizing the usage of crisis frames as 'narrative devices' to define issues (Benford & Snow, 2000; de Haas, 2005; Schöfberger, 2019). It also supports the theory of crises as 'policy windows', where increased attention for certain issues is deployed to attach policy solutions that fit the problem definition (Boin et al., 2009). This thesis also contributes to this research by showing that this shift depends on which organization is viewed as a 'loser'. Furthermore, the discursive power of organizations to steer narratives in their favor was further specified.

The analysis yielded varying degrees of support for the three hypotheses posed in the thesis. The individual analysis fully confirms the first hypothesis which theorizes the dominance of development narratives, the near lack of security threat narratives and the lesser mobilization of the partnership narrative in AU documents. The second hypothesis is largely confirmed, as narratives which justify the securitization of migration such as a security threat

narrative and a humanitarian issue narrative were indeed dominant in EU documents. The symptom of poverty was least mobilized, though this was expected to be the development narrative. The partnership narrative was indeed mobilized more by the EU. In joint documents, the third hypothesis confirmed that the humanitarian narrative was consistently mobilized, though the sudden mobilization of partnership narratives was surprising. The mobilization of security threat, symptom of poverty and-development narratives did depend on current events, yet the prioritization was more specifically dependent on which organization succeeded in being perceived as the loser in said current events.

It also seems that an organization's ability to portray itself as disfavored by the current conditions allows it to steer a joint narrative in a direction that is favorable to itself. Narratives on migration and security steer away from narratives which promote migration as a strategy for long-term development when the EU is perceived to be losing. Joint narratives then reflected the EU's interests. So far, the AU's success in steering toward optimistic narratives was successful when the EU gained more than it stood to lose from the mobilization of optimistic narratives. It would be harmful to reduce the AU to a passive actor, a silent bystander to an EU which leverages development funds in return for the signing of unfavorable agreements. Yet it would also be inaccurate to call the relations between the AU and EU a partnership. The EU's tendency to revert to relations in which development assistance is exchanged for migration management is still present (Diallo, 2020; Geiger & Pécout, 2013; Haastrup, 2020; Hettne & Söderbaum, 2005). Though the AU exercises its discursive power to a considerable degree, relations are not yet based on the mutual benefits and reciprocal relations they are claimed to be and when push comes to shove, the EU's interests prevail.

There are also some limitations to this thesis. The joint productions published following joint summits are the culmination of longer processes of negotiations and preparations. That means that while the most recent historical events which surround joint summits are important, there is a larger context which should be considered for a holistic view of the evolution of narratives. Therefore, further research would benefit from a study of the longer negotiation process to expand on the evolution of narratives over time and the role of current events in this evolution. Furthermore, the 'partnership' between the AU and EU is not the only relation which shapes migration and development policy. In relations with the African continent many other actors are involved, which is why further research must consider these parties' stake in steering narratives on migration and development.

On a final note, the narratives mobilized by political elites are not limited to the narratives outlined in this thesis. Narratives are simplified representations of reality and often

do not include the impact of policy on those who are most affected by it. What this thesis has not studied are the so-called micro-narratives, which emerge from migrants and members of host communities. While these narratives rarely impact policy, they determine the outcome of policy and migration experiences. The analysis of these micro-narratives in further research would be most valuable to bridge the gap between what is put on paper and what this really means for people on the move. Perhaps then, the AU and EU can reflect the complex reality of migration as equal partners and practice what they preach.

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