

DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF AN “ANTI-IMMIGRATION EUROPE” BY THE RIGHT-WING POLITICAL GROUPS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT*

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Abstract

This study is aimed at understanding and exposing how the European elites, i.e. the members of the right-wing political groups in the EP, use discourses as a means of controlling public discourse, and hence, the public mind. Discourses are used to legitimate the ideology, values and norms of the relevant political groups in the society, which may result in social power abuse, dominance or inequality. The study mainly argues that these political groups discursively construct an anti-immigration Europe during the EP debates within three main discourse topics: immigration as a security threat, as an economic threat and as a cultural threat. Along with some references to Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak as well as the Copenhagen School in terms of the securitisation of migration, this study mostly draws on the premises and strategies of Teun A. van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach of critical discourse analysis to base its arguments. It is seen that the members of the right-wing political groups tend to glorify the Self, i.e. Europe and sometimes their own country, with various positive attributions to them whereas they mostly refer to the Other, i.e. asylum seekers, refugees or migrants, through negative implications, presuppositions, denomination or predication, which is a common attitude of anti-immigration politicians and paves the way for the construction of an anti-immigration Europe. Last but not least, if there is a “refugee crisis”, then, dialectically, the opposite is also possible: “refugee awareness”. This study also aspires to contribute to the formation of “refugee awareness”.

Keywords: *Anti-immigration Europe; right-wing political groups in the European Parliament; securitisation of migration; critical discourse analysis; refugee awareness.*

* This article builds on the author's Ph.D. dissertation with the same title. This publication is part of my research work at Linköping University, thanks to a Swedish Institute scholarship and a Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey scholarship, respectively.

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AVRUPA PARLAMENTOSU'NDAKİ SAĞ SİYASİ GRUPLARIN SÖYLEMSEL 'GÖÇ KARŞITI AVRUPA' İNŞASI

Öz

Bu çalışma, Avrupalı seçkinlerin, yani Avrupa Parlamentosu'ndaki (AP) sağ siyasi grup üyelerinin kamusal söylemi, dolayısıyla kamusal aklı kontrol altına almanın bir aracı olarak söylemleri nasıl kullandığını anlamayı ve ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Söylemler, söz konusu siyasi grupların ideoloji, değer ve normlarının toplumda meşrulaştırılması amacıyla kullanılmaktadır. Bu durum, toplumsal gücün kötüye kullanılması, egemenlik veya eşitsizlik ile sonuçlanabilmektedir. Çalışma, esas olarak, bu siyasi grupların AP görüşmeleri sırasında üç ana söylem konusu çerçevesinde söylemsel olarak göç karşıtı Avrupa inşa ettiğini savunmaktadır: güvenlik tehdidi, ekonomik tehdit ve kültürel tehdit olarak göç. Bu çalışma, savlarını temellendirmek amacıyla, göçün güvenleleştirilmesi bağlamında Kopenhag Okulu'nun yanı sıra Norman Fairclough ve Ruth Wodak'a yapılan bazı atıflar ile birlikte, çoğunlukla Teun A. van Dijk'in eleştirel söylem çözümlemesi toplum-bilişsel yaklaşımı sayıtlarına ve stratejilerine dayanmaktadır. Sağ siyasi grup üyelerinin Öteki'ne, yani sığınmacı, mülteci ya da göçmenlere olumsuz imalar, önvarsayımlar, adlandırma veya yükleme ile atıfta bulunurken Öz'ü, yani Avrupa'yı ve bazen kendi ülkelerini çeşitli olumlu atıflarla yücelttiği görülmektedir. Bu durum, göç karşıtı siyasetçilerin yaygın bir tutumudur ve göç karşıtı Avrupa inşasına zemin hazırlamaktadır. Son ama oldukça önemli olarak, 'mülteci krizi' varsa, o halde, diyalektik olarak zıttı da mümkündür: 'mülteci farkındalığı'. Bu çalışma, aynı zamanda, 'mülteci farkındalığı' oluşumuna katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göç karşıtı Avrupa; Avrupa Parlamentosu'ndaki sağ siyasi gruplar; göçün güvenleleştirilmesi; eleştirel söylem çözümlemesi; mülteci farkındalığı.

Introduction

Who would like to be a migrant or refugee in a world of xenophobia, racism or anti-immigration? What if it is also added by populism of some political parties or groups, which is also embedded in public discourse and public mind in general? Indeed, no one would probably take the risk of drowning in the cold waters of the Mediterranean to reach such a dystopia if there was another choice. The survival of a single person is not less vital than the survival of the whole of humankind; at least in a utopian world, it should not be less important. In such a utopian world, there would be neither migrants nor refugees: "No

nation would ever violate any person's human rights, there would be no armed conflict from which people would need to flee, there would be no environmental catastrophe, and everywhere there would be economic prosperity" (Legomsky, 2000: 620). However, this is a non-utopian world, and there are millions of displaced people, migrants and refugees who struggle to survive in the face of increasing xenophobic, racist and anti-immigration sentiments among not only the right-wing but also, at least in general, left-wing political circles and their supporters.

This study, above all, aspires to deconstruct the phenomenon of "refugee crisis", and thus, to humbly contribute to the formation of "refugee awareness". Among the discussions on the neutrality of a scientific researcher, the researcher overtly takes sides with the asylum seekers, refugees and migrants regardless of their nationality, language, religion, sex or "colour" without distorting the facts and by remaining within the framework of scientific criteria. So as to understand and expose the construction of an anti-immigration Europe by the right-wing political groups in the European Parliament (EP), the study uses the premises and strategies of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as theoretical and methodological framework by also resorting to the relevant literature on securitisation. Because of the need to limit the scope of the study and also the shortage of the data regarding the anti-immigration discourses of the left-wing political groups in the EP, the study takes the discourses of the right-wing political groups in the 7th and 8th parliamentary terms, i.e. 2009–14 and 2014–19, respectively, as its focus and mainly argues that these right-wing political groups discursively construct an anti-immigration Europe during the EP debates. In the EP, the left-wing political groups are the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) and Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA) whereas the right-wing political groups are as follows: the European People's Party (EPP), European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) (Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD) in the 7th parliamentary term) and Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF). It should be noted that neither all members of the right-wing political groups endeavour to discursively construct an anti-immigration Europe nor none of the members of the left-wing political groups pursues such a goal. However, though it is not within the scope of this study and thus may not be delivered as an argument, the research conducted for the study has revealed that the right-wing political groups have a more intense and overt tendency to construct such a Europe through their discourses during the EP debates compared to the left-wing political groups. On the other hand, it has also shown that some members of these right-wing political groups deliver more blatant and fierce discourses on immigration whereas some are more moderate or covert in their discourses.

Lastly, this study is also aimed at creating an awareness of the increase in such anti-immigration discourses that may only serve for the “clashes” or “great divisions among humankind” (Huntington, 1993: 22).

Each section follows a sequence of political groups according to the number of their members in the EP. Thus, the sections start with the discourses of the EPP, and these are followed by the discourses of the ECR, EFDD and ENF, respectively. In this regard, the number of reviewed debates during the 7th and 8th parliamentary terms is 57 whereas the number of reviewed speeches in various official EU (European Union) languages is 709, 534 of which were found relevant for the study, and the most relevant ones were translated from the original language to English literally as much as possible if required, and analysed critically.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Discourse not only represents and signifies the world but also constitutes and constructs the world in meaning (Fairclough, 1992: 64). Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 258) argue that “discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped” and discursive practices “can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations” by representing things and positioning people in different ways. In this context, van Dijk (2001: 352) defines CDA as “a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context”. As one of the CDA approaches, the socio-cognitive approach assumes that discourse “controls the minds of political actors, and hence their actions” (van Dijk, 1997d: 44), and “who controls public discourse, at least partly controls the public mind” (van Dijk, 1997c: 44). Accordingly, there is a strong relation between power and discourse:

Power is control of action, which requires control of personal and social cognitions, which presupposes control of public discourse, which is possible only through special forms of access, which may in turn be based on political, economic, social or academic power resources (position, ownership, income, knowledge, expertise, etc.). (van Dijk, 1997a: 22)

There is also struggle for discourse; in other words, “discourse is the power which is to be seized” (Foucault, 1981: 52–53). This assumption regarding discourse motivates critical discourse analyst to understand and expose social inequality, and finally, to resist it (van Dijk, 2001: 352). At this point, the question is how to understand and expose the inequality through discourses. In his socio-cognitive approach, van Dijk (1997c: 31) asserts that cognition plays a fundamental role in producing and understanding text and talk, and “discourses are constructive in the sense that their constitutive units may be functionally used, understood or analysed as elements of larger ones, thus also creating

hierarchical structures” (van Dijk, 1997c: 30). To understand and expose social inequality through discourses, van Dijk’s socio-cognitive approach employs overall and specific strategies for CDA as follows:

Table 1: **Overall and specific strategies for CDA**

Overall Strategies	Positive Self-presentation, Negative Other-presentation, Apparent Denial, Apparent Sympathy, Fairness, Top-down Transfer, Justification
Specific Strategies	Implications, Presuppositions, Denomination, Predication, Storytelling, Reversal, Numbers Game

Source: Adapted from (van Dijk, 2011: 396–398; 1997b: 36-55).

Within the context of CDA, the theory and method of the study, the Copenhagen School should also be referred so as to complete the CDA premises in terms of the securitisation of migration. As one of the outstanding members of the school, Wæver (1995) discusses security as a “speech act” in his article on securitisation and desecuritisation, and in another study, Wæver (1996: 108) argues that the securitisation perspective “can make politicians, activists and academics aware that they make a choice, when they treat something as a security issue”. According to Buzan *et al.* (1998: 21), “security is about survival”, and briefly, it is about presenting an issue as an existential threat to the “referent object”, i.e. the state, society, etc., so as to justify the use of extraordinary measures including the use of force when necessary to handle it. However, it should be noted that the security is a “self-referential practice” in which the issue in question becomes a security issue because it is presented as a threat, which means that it may not be a real existential threat (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 24). Then, how to study securitisation? The answer is to study discourse as well as political constellations (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 25). However, a discourse itself is not more than a securitising move, so it entails the discourse to be accepted as a securitisation by the audience so that the issue may be securitised. At this point, the security speech act performed by a securitising actor plays a crucial role in the securitisation of the issue in question (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 40). On the other hand, it is better to aim for desecuritisation than securitisation, and desecuritisation is defined as “the shifting of issues out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining processes of the political sphere” (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 4) or “not to have issues phrased as ‘threats against which we have countermeasures’ but to move them out of this threat-defense sequence and into the ordinary public sphere” (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 29).

In this study, the securitising actor or actors are the right-wing political groups in the EP, and existential threat to the referent object, i.e. the EU, is immigration in the “sectors” of security, economy and culture.¹ The speech act as a means of the securitisation of migration is the discourses delivered by the right-wing political group members during the EP debates. These members are aware of the fact that they must persuade the audience or public opinion to control the public discourse and mind as put forward in CDA in order that these discourses as securitising moves may turn into securitisation, which literally means the construction of an anti-immigration Europe. The term “refugee crisis” is an oft-used speech act to securitise migration in the EU, and is often followed by negative terms such as “illegal immigration”, “economic migrant”, “fake refugee”, “invasion”, “flood”, etc. The desecuritisation of migration, however, is still possible by taking it out of “emergency mode”, i.e. “refugee crisis”, and moving into the “ordinary public sphere” or “refugee awareness”, the formation of which this study also aspires to contribute to.

How do the right-wing political groups in the EP discredit or marginalise immigration and attempt to control the public discourse and mind in this sense in line with their own ideology, and finally, construct an anti-immigration Europe? To answer this critical question, the following sections examine the securitisation of migration in the discourse topics of immigration as a security threat, as an economic threat and as a cultural threat, respectively, by these political groups through starting with the most populous party, the EPP, and ending with the newly formed and the least populous one, the ENF.

Portrayal of Immigration as a Security Threat in the European Parliament

The study examines the most common anti-immigration discourses by the right-wing political groups in the EP. As seen during the research for the study, one of these discourses is: “immigration is a security threat”. Undoubtedly, as the security issue is directly related to the survival of the individuals and Europe, or as an example of “existential threat” (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 21), the MEPs (Members of the European Parliament) are often quite harsh in their discourses on the issue and resort to both overall and specific strategies to justify these discourses not only to get the support of the public opinion but also to control the public discourse and mind in this respect. In other words, there is a continuous interaction between the relevant political groups and the European

¹ The Copenhagen School categorises security in terms of existence into five sectors but does not limit to these: military, political, societal, economic, and environmental (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 21–23). Though there are some similarities between the sectors involved in the study and those of the Copenhagen School, it should be noted that they do not exactly overlap, and the study does not pursue such a goal.

citizens in the context of discursive construction of an anti-immigration Europe. The terrorist attacks are seen to be the most frequently used references by the MEPs for the security of the individuals or societies whereas the Schengen Area, Frontex (European Border and Coast Guard Agency)² or external borders often take place in the discourses with the claim of securing the sovereignty of the EU nations or ensuring the “political” security (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 22), if not the EU as a whole. As a consequence, a migrant or refugee is easily denominated as a potential terrorist, if not a terrorist. This section examines the portrayal of immigration as a security threat during the EP debates through such denominations and other strategies of negative Other-presentation as well as positive Self-presentation strategies, and exemplifies it through at least one excerpt from each right-wing political group.

The EPP is the most moderate political group of the four right-wing political groups in the EP in terms of their discourses regarding the asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in general. In comparison to particularly the MEPs of the ENF and EFDD, the EPP members mostly endeavour to avoid the discourses that may be called discriminative, racist or anti-immigration by the counter-discourse groups. However, an in-depth probe to these discourses reveals some implications and presuppositions used for the prevalent negative Other-presentation by the right-wing politicians.

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, I congratulate Mr Dati, who has worked hard at a complex text which seeks to embrace the complex aspects of this absurd phenomenon: **violent extremism and intolerance are often children of marginalization and poverty. But** these reasons can never justify this violence.

The approximately 5,000 European citizens who have become foreign fighters have shown the failure of integration policies. **I do not want to fall into the trivial temptation of the “refugee = terrorist” mathematical equation, but** it is of fundamental importance that in order to enter Europe the controls must be rigorously reinforced and that **all the people who migrate on our continent are registered**. There can be **no exceptions to security** (Barbara Matera, EPP, 24 November 2015).

² The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) was established by Regulation (EU) 2016/1624 of 14 September 2016 by replacing the “European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union”. However, it maintains the same legal personality and the same short name: Frontex. See (EU, 2016).

In the excerpt above, Barbara Matera admits the impact of marginalization and poverty on the violent extremism and intolerance. And accompanied with an apparent denial, the context of this excerpt makes the MEPs as the primary target and the public opinion as the secondary target of these discourses through mass media (including social media as its prominent part in the 21st century) have the cognition that the refugees are not only marginal or poor but also intolerant and “terrorists”, which are explicit examples of denomination for the refugees. The discourse about the failure of integration of those people combined with the strategy of numbers game implies that all foreign fighters from Europe have a refugee origin though she does not provide the target groups with any evidence on this claim.

Before starting to analyse the following excerpt by a member of the ECR, it should be noted that there are also some MEPs of not only the left-wing but also the right-wing political groups in the EP who really share the grief of the migrants or refugees, really empathise with them and somehow present the Other in a positive way though they are quite rare. This study particularly focuses on the discourses of the right-wing political groups in the EP since their anti-immigration discourses are so common and mostly explicit. However, these discourses may also be implicit so as not to draw the reaction of the counter-discourse groups, or because of the strategy of impression management so as to “avoid tacit or explicit accusations of xenophobia or racism by the opposition, by relevant organizations, or by more liberal segments of the public at large” (van Dijk, 1997b: 44).

We want to fight immigration. It is a great problem. In the meantime, our notice board and computer are going wrong. Let us tackle the things which we can really tackle effectively.

Migration is, of course, one of the greatest problems facing Europe today. What is more, it is a problem not just for us politicians, **but it is also a problem for the people of the European Union’s Member States.** It is, perhaps, **one of the main challenges currently facing the political class in Europe,** and **one of the main problems of our electors** (Ryszard Czarnecki, ECR, 15 September 2009).

Migration is discussed through various phrases by the right-wing political groups during the parliamentary debates in the EP: “migration crisis”, “migration issue” or “migration problem” as in this case in the excerpt above from a debate in the 7th parliamentary term. However, whichever term or phrase they use for migration, the general tendency of these political group members is to present it as a threat to Europe. According to Ryszard Czarnecki, this is such a “great problem” or threat that “we”, both the “politicians” and the “people” of the EU, must “fight immigration”. Indeed, fighting or struggling against

“[illegal] immigration” is a well-known discourse in the construction of an anti-immigration Europe in the public mind by the right-wing political groups.

The members of the EFDD are usually explicit in their anti-immigration discourses. It should be noted again that the EFDD is the successor of the Eurosceptic EFD, which was one of the anti-immigration political groups of the EP in the 7th parliamentary term. As the study includes the discourse examples of the 7th and 8th parliamentary terms, one of the excerpts in the next section belongs to the EFD.

Madam President, this report³ completely fails to acknowledge the cause of the current **terrorist threat**, which is ideological. **That ideology is fundamentalist Islam. From its creation, Islam has been propagated by force and violence.**

President Hollande has said that **we are at war**. The first casualties in this war must be appeasement and political correctness. We face one of two choices: we can accept eventual submission to the **ideology of an ever-increasing Islamic population**, or we can take the first step in resistance and **end any more mass immigration from Islamic countries**. Only then can we start to address the difficult issue of integrating the **existing Muslim population** (Gerard Batten, EFDD, 24 November 2015).

Another strategy used by the right-wing political groups in the EP to discursively construct an anti-immigration Europe is to generalize all asylum seekers, migrants and refugees into a single ideology: the “fundamentalist Islam”. This study does not question the fundamentalist Islam or its proponents, it only deals with its negative connotations in the public discourse and public mind. One of such negative connotations is that Islam is put on par with “force and violence”, as seen in the excerpt above. That is, immigration is denominated and predicated as the source of “terrorism” since almost all immigrants arriving in Europe are Muslims, and hence, are presented as “terrorists” or a security threat to the EU. However, Gerard Batten himself does not avoid threatening or frightening the European citizens with the so-called immigration threat by presenting them only two options as if there was no other way: submission to the “terrorism” stemming from immigration or ending “mass” immigration from Islamic countries, which is an obvious overall strategy of negative Other-presentation along with the strategy of justification. Furthermore, to legitimate his anti-immigration discourses, Batten refers to Hollande, the then President of France, and quotes from him: “we are at war”. In this way, Batten goes on his efforts to polarize two parties in the public mind

³ See (EP, 2015).

in line with the interests of his political group, the EFDD, in the EP: the Christians as the “Self” and the Muslims as the “Other”.

Compared to the other right-wing political group members in the EP, the MEPs of the ENF are often more overt in their anti-immigration discourses as exemplified below.

The EU summit on 21 October did not yield anything as expected. **This EU is a complete fiasco** and I repeat, Frontex is a towing service for **illegal invaders from Islamic countries. That must stop.** The open borders **are a feast for terrorists**, for people and arms smugglers and **that has to stop. The economic dictation of Brussels plunges citizens into deep poverty. That must stop!**

I call on this Commission to **restore citizens' security, throw out all the invaders from the EU, stop foreign funding for mosques, close national borders** (Marcel de Graaff, ENF, 26 October 2016).

Similar to the ECR and EFDD, and as it is also obvious in the excerpt above, the ENF is a Eurosceptic political group in the EP. In other words, these political groups do not favour European integration or the EU as a whole. For this reason, Marcel de Graaff calls the EU as a “complete fiasco”. However, what differs the ENF from these two political groups is that it is also known with its apparent anti-immigration ideology. In this excerpt, the denomination of immigrants and refugees with the terms “illegal, invader, terrorist” is the result of such anti-immigration ideology. Unlike many discourse examples in the study, this excerpt presents immigration as not only a security threat, but also an economic and a cultural threat: according to de Graaff, they are “terrorists”, they are the main reason of the “deep poverty” of the EU citizens, and the foreign funding for “mosques” is the indication of this cultural threat. The emphasis on “Islamic” countries also reveals why these victims of war, persecution or natural disasters in their own countries are not considered as ordinary “asylum seekers” but “illegal invaders”, therefore, “that must stop”.

Portrayal of Immigration as an Economic Threat in the European Parliament

Unlike the welcoming discourse of “guestworker” before the oil crisis of 1973, the economic narrative regarding immigration has also dramatically shifted towards an anti-immigration trend in Europe in the first quarter of the 21st century. Undoubtedly, the war-torn countries end up with not only millions of displaced people, refugees or asylum seekers but also migrants, who are in limbo and often do not have another option except for fleeing their country to survive. However, so as to avoid the international legal, humanitarian and conscientious responsibility for these people in need, using denominations such

as “economic migrant” or “fake refugee” for most or all of these people are firm but not fair. In the portrayal of immigration as an economic threat, the referent object is the society, i.e. “our young people”, “our unemployed” and “homeless or poor pensioners”, overtaken by the “Other” whereas immigration is presented as the existential threat again. This section gives the details of this portrayal of immigration as an economic threat.

In the process of production and reproduction of an anti-immigration Europe, the right-wing political groups in the EP make vigorous efforts to distinguish between “economic migrants” and refugees. There are many examples of such anti-immigration discourses during the parliamentary debates by the members of the EPP. One of the distinct examples of them is as follows: “Italy has always been a land of welcome and continues to be, but we must welcome those who escape from wars, discrimination and we cannot accommodate everyone, and therefore economic migrants,” (Salvatore Domenico Pogliese, EPP, 12 September 2017). Salvatore Domenico Pogliese implies that there are “fake” refugees who have nothing to do with wars or discrimination but are in Europe just for economic prosperity of the EU. While predicating, and hence, negatively presenting these people, he also glorifies his own country, Italy, by presenting it as a “land of welcome”.

For weeks now, thousands of migrants have been landing on the shores of the Mediterranean and, in particular, in Malta and Lampedusa, **fleeing the situation in their country, where unprecedented political instability reigns.** Frontex has rightly launched Operation Hermes to help the Italian authorities **cope with this mass influx of migrants** to their shores. . . . **This mass influx of third-country nationals will result in waves of illegal migrants entering many Member States.** We need only see how the French authorities are intercepting **every day hundreds of illegal migrants arriving straight from Italy.** We know full well that **those asylum seekers include many economic migrants who “slip” into these mixed migratory flows** (Véronique Mathieu, EPP, 4 April 2011).

In most cases, the right-wing political group members in the EP use the “Schengen Area” and “Frontex” so as to portray immigration as a security threat against the EU’s internal and external borders, and thus, against the EU citizens. However, in the excerpt above, Frontex is used as a means to “cope with this mass influx of ‘migrants’”, in other words, with the economic threat of immigration. More importantly, Véronique Mathieu is in a kind of contradiction with herself as she defines those “fleeing the situation in their country, where unprecedented political instability reigns” as “migrants”, and then, claims that “those asylum seekers include many economic migrants”. This may be because of the fact that there has yet to develop such an effort to distinguish between the asylum seekers, refugees or migrants in the 7th parliamentary term for the

justification of anti-immigration discourses. Mathieu also uses other specific strategies to present the asylum seekers or “migrants” as an economic threat. The most obvious strategy used in the excerpt is the numbers game: “for weeks now”, “thousands of migrants”, “this mass influx of migrants”, “this mass influx of third-country nationals”, “waves of illegal migrants”, “every day”, “hundreds of illegal migrants”, “many economic migrants” and “these mixed migratory flows”. It should be noted that most of these phrases include a sort of ambiguity in them and do not reflect precise numbers, which is thought to be intentionally done to confuse the public mind, and thus, to increase the level of fear on immigration. Another strategy used by Mathieu in this excerpt is the presupposition: “This mass influx of third-country nationals ‘will result in’ waves of illegal migrants entering many Member States.” Furthermore, the excerpt is full of denominations: “illegal migrants” used twice, “economic migrants” as well as implicit “influx of migrants”, “influx of third-country nationals” and “mixed migratory flows”.

The dominant discourse among the MEPs of the ECR is that there should be a clear distinction between “genuine” refugees who flee war or torture and migrants, i.e. “fake” refugees, who look for better economic opportunities in “our” Europe. Such denominations and predications are repetitively used by these MEPs so as to discursively construct an anti-immigration Europe in the minds of the public at large. By using such denominations and predications once and again, they aim to give the message that “this kind of immigration is an economic and social burden, not a resource” (Jussi Halla-aho, ECR, 4 April 2017).

Europe cannot afford this kind of immigration, socially or economically. We have failed in integrating the immigrants that we already have, and that failure will become catastrophic as the numbers grow. So, we must stop the flow. Migrants who are rescued at sea must be returned to the port of departure, and not brought to European ports. This will also stop smuggling, because nobody wants to pay for nothing, and it will stop the tragedies at sea (Jussi Halla-aho, ECR, 25 October 2017).

In the excerpt above, Jussi Halla-aho strives to justify his discourse “we must stop the ‘flow’”. So, this will stop not only “smuggling” but also the “tragedies” at sea, a kind of strategy of apparent sympathy, “for their own good” again. According to Halla-aho, immigration is an obvious economic threat to “us” because “Europe cannot afford this kind of immigration, socially or economically”, which will be “catastrophic” as “their” number grows due to “the demographic and socioeconomic trends in Africa and the Middle East”, which is another negative Other-presentation. The cognition behind all these discriminative and anti-immigration discourses is self-evidently summed up in

Halla-aho's own words: "nobody wants to pay for nothing". So, Europe does not want to pay for the refugees, in other words, the "nothing".

In the portrayal of immigration as an economic threat, the discourses of the EFDD members are as fierce as the ones delivered by them for the portrayal of immigration as a security threat. On the other hand, in general, comparatively more moderate discourses regarding immigration in the 7th parliamentary term are replaced with blatant anti-immigration discourses in the 8th parliamentary term.

Mr President, I speak from a UK perspective. **We have a long and proud history of accepting people from elsewhere, especially those fleeing political and religious persecution.**

In a time when there were no schools or hospitals, and electricity and public transport were non-existent, newcomers made their own way; but now they need these facilities, and **we, the most densely-crowded country in the EU, are struggling to cope. That is no good for anyone, and we certainly cannot provide the social security they need.**

In these difficult times, we cannot provide properly for those who have been paying their taxes in the UK throughout their working lives; we cannot go on taking in people. So the suggestions in this report⁴ are impossible (Derek Roland Clark, EFD, 12 March 2013).

The excerpt above belongs to the 7th parliamentary term. Although the discourses of the members of the EPP and ECR are more moderate against immigration in this term compared to the 8th parliamentary term, the anti-immigration discourses of the EFDD members keep their severity in both terms. Derek Roland Clark starts with that well-known positive Self-presentation strategy and argues that "'we' have a long and proud history of accepting people from elsewhere, especially those fleeing political and religious persecution." Afterwards, he delivers his anti-immigration discourses through the strategy of justification along with the top-down transfer by claiming that "we" are struggling with our own problems in the UK as "the most densely-crowded country in the EU", so "'we' certainly cannot provide the social security 'they' need" while "we" cannot provide it even for "our" own citizens "paying their taxes in the UK throughout their working lives". It seems that Clark is only concerned about those "our" people, "our" citizens, "our" UK or "our" Europe whereas he completely ignores the fact that "our" country, i.e. the UK, is responsible for the "exploitation" of the "Others" and "their" countries for the sake of colonialism for ages, which still continues on various forms in the "third world countries".

⁴ See (EP, 2013).

The members of the ENF are overt in their anti-immigration discourses regarding economy as much as in the ones regarding security.

Mr President, ladies and gentlemen, over the past five years, **700,000 presumed refugees** have landed in Italy. **More than half a million**, or **80%**, are **illegal immigrants** who do not run away from any war. These **false refugees** take advantage of the European asylum system and the inept Italian government, with the complicity of Brussels, offers these immigrants **food, shelter and free services** for years.

All this cost the Italians **€ 14 billion**: a meaningless madness, a scandalous injustice. **The Italians are rightly pissed off with Europe** and with the Letta, Renzi and Gentiloni governments, which have opened the doors of **our** country to the **invasion of illegal immigrants** (Mara Bizzotto, ENF, 15 November 2017).

In the excerpt above, this time, the refugees or migrants are denominated as “presumed reugees”, “false refugees” or “illegal immigrants”. Indeed, they are against not only “illegal” immigration but also the legal one. These denominations are supported by using some numbers in accordance with the strategy of numbers game: “700,000 presumed refugees”, “more than half of a million, or 80%, are illegal immigrants”, or “all this cost the Italians € 14 billion”. Thus, the Italians are involved in the anti-immigration discourses of Mara Bizzotto, and a solid ground is sought for public legitimation of such anti-immigration discourses portraying immigration as an economic threat. This rhetorical discourse does not avoid expressing some blatant terms to increase its persuasive impact on the public discourse and mind by referring to the cost of € 14 billion as “a meaningless madness, a scandalous injustice”. After all, “the Italians are rightly pissed off with Europe” and with the relevant Italian governments which open the doors of “our” country to the “invasion of illegal immigrants”, which is not only the use of the strategies of denomination and predication as the parts of an overall strategy of negative Other-presentation but also a strategy of top-down transfer for the justification of this anti-immigration attitude of her political group.

Portrayal of Immigration as a Cultural Threat in the European Parliament

In the portrayal of immigration as a cultural threat, or in the “societal sector” as suggested by Buzan *et al.* (1998: 22–23), the referent object is “large-scale collective identities that can function independent of the state, such as nations and religions”. The securitisation of the migrants, or migration, is based on “whether the holders of the collective identity take a relatively closed-minded or a relatively open-minded view of how their identity is constituted and maintained” (Buzan *et al.*, 1998: 23). In this context, the maintenance or

reproduction of anti-immigration language is enabled by means of a discourse of the existential threat against the identity. In other words, as detailed in this section, the right-wing political group members in the EP present immigration as a matter of survival for the European culture with a special emphasis on national identities and Christianity as well as European civilization and *acquis*. Though the quantity of the discourses related to the cultural threat is relatively less compared to the ones regarding the security and economic threats, these discourses do not fall short in terms of their quality. The section is aimed at giving the outstanding discourse examples of the members of the relevant political groups so as to reveal how they discursively construct an anti-immigration Europe in the context of cultural threat.

The overall strategy of negative Other-presentation is also dominant in anti-immigration discourses of the right-wing political groups in the EP in terms of presenting immigration as a cultural threat. The following excerpt exemplifies this overall strategy as well as specific strategies that are resorted within this context by the EPP members.

In agreement with Hungary and the Visegrád countries, our primary task should be **to protect Europe at all costs from the invasion of illegal immigrants**. It is true that **real refugees** should be provided all the help and we must respect for human rights of migrants. **But our main concern is to protect Europe's citizens and their nations, our security, our democratic system, our identity and our common values. The Holiness of the Pope must also protect our European Christianity, our faith and our values** (László Tőkés, EPP, 4 April 2017).

In this excerpt, there is another denomination regarding migration: “invasion of illegal immigrants”. László Tőkés strives to present immigration as a threat, or in this case, mostly a cultural threat except for the emphasis on “our” security in the last part of the excerpt, in the minds. The frequency of using the term “protect” by Tőkés should also be underlined to this end: to “protect Europe at all costs”, “protect Europe’s citizens and their nations” or “protect our European Christianity”. In this respect, the migrants and refugees are portrayed as an enemy of the European identity and Christianity. Furthermore, there is another noteworthy point: “European Christianity”. It means that there are various forms of Christianity, and it is the “European Christianity” to be protected against this so-called invasion, which is an example of positive Self-presentation while presenting the Other in a negative way. However, the dilemma within this discourse comes just at the end of the same excerpt: “The Holiness of the Pope must also protect our European Christianity, our faith and our values.” If it is “our” European Christianity, “our” faith and “our” values, then, it is also “our” Holiness of the Pope, which implies that “we” exclude and discriminate against not only the migrants and refugees who believe in Islam

but also the “Others” from other parts of the world who do not belong to “our” democratic system, “our” identity or “our” common values, i.e. the European Christianity in general, even if they are Christian. Lastly, Tókéš uses the strategy of apparent sympathy with the “real refugees” who should be given all the help and refers to the “respect for human rights of migrants”, which is followed by the well-known phrase “but” to justify or disclaim his anti-immigration discourses.

In the 7th parliamentary term, there are so few remarks of the ECR members regarding immigration, and the excerpt below is one of those rare discourses that may be categorised within the cultural dimension of immigration.

Mr President, in spite of the fact that I live a relatively long way away, in Poland, I feel that I understand entirely the concerns provoked by **uncontrolled immigration** into France or Italy. **Immigration from North Africa quite naturally exacerbates cultural and social tensions, and intensifies pressure on the social budgets of the Member States.** We therefore have a lot to discuss, and we should not try to ignore the **matter. French, Italian and Maltese citizens** are today faced with the highest bills on account of the fact that controls along the **European Union’s external borders** are simply not working. **The European nations are also footing the bill for our failed efforts to halt immigration into Europe** (Konrad Szymański, ECR, 10 May 2011).

As seen through the soft discourses of Konrad Szymański, the “uncontrolled immigration” is not described as a threat, at least yet, but a “matter” since it provokes the “concerns” for the EU in general and “France or Italy” in particular. The denomination of “uncontrolled immigration” is followed by the strategy of justification: “Immigration from North Africa quite naturally exacerbates ‘cultural and social tensions’, and intensifies pressure on the social budgets of the Member States.” As a matter of fact, the discourses of this sort pave the way for fierce portrayal of immigration as not only a cultural threat but also an economic threat against the EU in the 8th parliamentary term, so they should be accepted as a turning point in this respect. Szymański also does not avoid using the strategy of top-down transfer to justify his anti-immigration discourses and increase the impact of his discourses in the public discourse and public mind by attributing to the “French, Italian and Maltese citizens” and by claiming that “The European nations are also footing the bill for our failed efforts to halt immigration into Europe.”

As detailed below, the EFDD members also resort to the overall strategies of positive Self-presentation and negative Other-presentation as well as some specific strategies in the discourse topic of immigration as a cultural threat to discredit immigration in the public discourse, and thus, public mind.

Mr President, we learned something from the European Parliament's reaction to Article 50. This debate is on an EU response to all the things you try and associate with the **Brexit** vote. If you genuinely want to build a better Europe, how about this: stop what you are doing and think about why people voted the way they did. **Those you call "populists" are patriots. We love our countries, we love our communities, we love living in nations where the people are the masters and, through democratic decisions, the people have the final say.** What they hate is you lot imposing **unfettered immigration that has transformed communities** without the people's say. **They do not like seeing their streets changed without their approval. They do not like living in places that no longer resemble those they grew up in,** and they know the EU is to blame. You can call us **all the names** you like, but it will not change the result. **The majority of the British people voted to get our borders back, to get our democracy back, to get our country back** and the sooner we are out of this place, the better (Tim Aker, EFDD, 5 April 2017).

The excerpt above is an example of the conflict or dilemma between "our" country and "our" Europe for the right-wing political groups except for the EPP. These Eurosceptic political groups favour to get "out of this place", and as seen in the example of Brexit, there appear new names for such exits such as Svexit as called by Kristina Winberg (EFDD, 15 December 2015) or Frexit, a promise given by Marine Le Pen, former Co-Chair of the ENF, to the French citizens (*FT*, 14 March 2017). As given above, the alleged aim of these political groups at exiting the EU is mostly "to get 'our' borders back, to get 'our' democracy back, to get 'our' country back". On the other hand, Tim Aker uses the strategy of apparent denial by claiming that "we" are not "populists" or any of "all the names" you call us but "patriots" who love "our" countries and "our" communities. He also presents the Self in a positive way by referring to the people who are the "masters" and "have the final say" through "democratic decisions" whereas the Other is presented in a negative way through denomination and predication: "unfettered immigration that has transformed communities". By using the strategy of top-down transfer along with some implications and presuppositions, Aker argues that "not us but the people" are against immigration: "They do not like seeing their streets changed without their approval. They do not like living in places that no longer resemble those they grew up in." In other words, according to Aker, the people consider immigration as a cultural threat, which is discursively constructed through such negative Other-presentations by the members of the right-wing political groups.

The elites within the dominant group play a prominent role in the processes of reproduction of racism, xenophobia or intolerance, and their power is defined both by their preferential access to social resources such as housing, welfare, education, knowledge and status, and by preferential access to, as well as

control over, various forms of public discourse, which results in production of public opinion and the dominant consensus on ethnic affairs (van Dijk, 1997b: 32–33). As these elite groups have the power and dominance, which is defined as “power abuse” to distinguish such power from legitimate and acceptable forms of power (van Dijk, 1993: 255), they can define what racism, xenophobia, homophobia or intolerance are or not, as seen in the excerpt below.

Like everyone else I can only be indignant towards provocations, words or acts **racist, xenophobic, homophobic or intolerant**. Unfortunately, in this respect, the Commission and the Council, like most of the governors of the Member States, are blinded by a well-meaning ideology.

For example, the **accusation of racism** is very popular on the left as in an uncertain right with regard to anyone who fights against **communitarianism, uncontrolled immigration, multiculturalism, the dilution of identity, the defense of French cultural heritage or European or the looting of social security**. Professional anti-racists have used it, in an often inappropriate use, only intended to discredit the other or knowingly forgetting to describe as racism what should be (**racism of anti-white, anti-Christian or anti-French, anti-Semitism assumed certain populations...**).

This anti-racism is now emptied of its substance by the **blessed of multiculturalism and social dumping**. They use it above all to serve as a moral guarantee in order to make forget the great politico-financial affairs and the **real problems and aspirations of the peoples** (Dominique Bilde, ENF, 1 December 2016).

Firstly, Dominique Bilde starts her speech by resorting to the strategy of apparent denial. Then, “uncontrolled” immigration is delineated as a cultural threat, and categorized along with not only “multiculturalism” as a negative connotation but also the “dilution of identity” and the “looting of social security”. The strategy of reversal, i.e. “we’ are not discriminating, ‘they’ are”, is used in the next lines of the excerpt. Bilde, by using the power of status as a member of the ECR in the EP, defines racism as the “anti-white, anti-Christian or anti-French, anti-Semitism”, but not as anti-immigration. Hence, Bilde implies that the EU should stop dealing with such anti-racism “emptied of its substance”, and focus on the real problems and aspirations of “our” peoples, which is a kind of top-down transfer used to justify this anti-immigration discourse.

Conclusion

This study has examined how the right-wing political groups in the EP discursively construct an anti-immigration Europe. With references to the premises of CDA within the framework of power and dominance of the

political elites to control the public discourse and public mind in line with their own ideology, values and norms, the study is an attempt to understand and expose how the members of the right-wing political groups in the EP securitise migration. The research for the study has shown that the securitisation of migration in this context mostly occurs in three main discourse topics: immigration as a security threat, as an economic threat and as a cultural threat. This securitisation results in power abuse and inequality in the society. In this framework, the study deals with the single directly elected body of the EU, i.e. the EP, which has increased its power as one of the decision-making actors of the EU since its establishment, and the study examines four right-wing political groups representing the half of the EP as its unit of analysis.

The study shows that the anti-immigration discourses by the right-wing political groups in question have considerably increased in quantity and become more severe in quality in the 8th parliamentary term compared to the 7th parliamentary term. Considering the current conjuncture in Europe as well as in other parts of the world, these discourses are expected to get worse both in relevant quantity and quality. More importantly, as more extreme right-wing political groups such as the ENF and EFDD increase the tune of their anti-immigration discourses, more moderate right-wing political groups such as the EPP and ECR try to catch up with them in such discourses instead of opposing them in this context. Though it is not within the scope of this study, it should also be noted that some left-wing political groups are also seen to join this competition of anti-immigration discourses as they witness the so-called success of these right-wing political groups in the elections. Such an election success may be indicative of the fact that these right-wing political groups achieve to control the public discourse and mind by means of such anti-immigration discourses not only in the EP debates but also during their propaganda at the EU and national level for the elections as a reflection of these debates in the EP. Though discursive construction of an anti-immigration Europe is a sort of continuous interaction between these political groups and the European citizens, the political groups mostly retain the power as elites. However, in democratic entities such as the EU, the increase in quantity and quality of these anti-immigration discourses in the EP debates may only be explained by the assent of the public opinion on the issue.

Last but not least, the recurrent call of the right-wing political group members for solidarity on immigration should not be a sort of solidarity of the EU Member States against the asylum seekers, refugees and migrants; on the contrary, such a solidarity should be built in favour of these people as well as the EU. The EU still does not have a common migration and asylum policy despite an ongoing process for the CEAS (Common European Asylum System). Even if this process results in success, it is not hard to claim that such a CEAS

will eventually have anti-immigration characteristics in such an atmosphere full of negative sentiments against immigration since it will somehow be an output of the co-decisions taken by the EP along with the Council. In this respect, it is vital to understand and expose these discourses so as to resist a likely social inequality in the form of a CEAS that may result from power abuse via political discourse. A constant production and reproduction of anti-immigration language in public opinion through these discourses makes it harder and harder for a critical discourse analyst to resist such social inequality. Therefore, this study should be accepted as not only a critical but also an inspiring part of a wide scaled research expected to be carried out in this field.

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