

The European Union under Pressure

Public Narratives on Europe and its Borders:
The 2013 Lampedusa Migrant Boat in British, German and French Newspaper
Accounts



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Abstract

This project aims to explore understandings of ‘Europe’ and its borders in public discourses in Britain, Germany and France. Thereby, it tries to shed light on Europe’s assumed ‘identity crisis’: scholars have argued that the European Union (EU) is unable to yarn a common thread of European identity among its putative citizens.

In order to investigate these public understandings of Europe, the empirical analysis aims to examine newspaper accounts on the migrant boat which sank near the Italian island of Lampedusa on the 3rd October 2013. It is estimated that more than 300 migrants, mostly believed to be Eritrean, died in the Mediterranean Sea in their attempt to claim asylum in the EU. The shipwreck triggered an important media debate on the European border and asylum policies in its aftermath. The thesis will show that these media representations are important for the study of ‘Europe’: they are “key to understanding the ways in which people understand the world around them and their place within it” as Sharp (2011, 298) has noted. A total number of 109 articles, directly relating to the Lampedusa shipwreck in the newspapers *The Guardian* (Britain), *Der Spiegel* (Germany) and *Le Monde* (France), have been compiled, coded and analysed.

As I will outline in Chapter 4, each of the analysed newspapers ascribes different meanings to the event and thus articulates different understandings of Europe. These findings parallel with the argument that “‘Europe’ figures as a differentially articulated concept, vision and project within self-defining national narratives” as Moisió et al. (2013, 744) have noted. I will argue that ‘Europe’ should therefore be understood as a “traveling idea” (Said: 1983) that changes as it traverses from one location or point in time to another since it adapts to the new historical and social context. All of three analysed ‘ideas’ of Europe, however, are highly critical of the European border and asylum policies. The European Union is therefore increasingly under public pressure.

These findings indicate that academic works on the current European border-making are unable to explain the articulated ‘ideas’ of Europe. By arguing that Europe re-asserts a postcolonial identity (see van Houtum: 2010) or is possessed by a ‘globalized fear’ (Pain: 2009) they draw a rather deterministic and essentialized picture of ‘Europe’. By doing so, they fail to make sense of Europe’s inner differences and negotiation processes and draw an overly pessimistic and critical picture of ‘Fortress Europe’ – in effect, they overlook possible starting points for future changes and discursive dislocations.

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1. Introduction

“There will be no peace in Europe if the states rebuild themselves on the basis of national sovereignty, with its implications of prestige politics and economic protection [...] The countries of Europe are not strong enough individually to be able to guarantee prosperity and social development for their peoples. The states of Europe must therefore form a federation or a European entity that would make them into a common economic union”

- Jean Monnet¹ -

It was still in the times of the Second World War when Jean Monnet first voiced his vision of a united Europe that would enable the peaceful development and cooperation of the states of Europe. But what has become of Jean Monnet’s dream today, more than 70 years later? Although the European Union (EU) has gone a long and peaceful way of becoming an ever stronger economic and political community of now 28 member states, Monnet’s project of European unity seems to face an unprecedented crisis. The recent European parliamentary elections in May 2014 revealed viably that the European citizens are increasingly at odds with the European Union: right-wing and euro-sceptic parties marked a remarkable rise all across the European continent. The British ‘Ukip’, the French ‘Front National’ and the German ‘AfD’ have attracted more voters than ever before. But how can the public’s ever greater doubt about the aims and benefits of the European Union be explained?

Scholars in the social sciences have examined this question in light of a ‘European identity crisis’. The American political scientist Francis Fukuyama (2012) for example has argued that “the EU is undergoing a life-threatening crisis. It’s not simply a technical matter better left to financiers and economists. In many ways, it is really a crisis over the identity of the EU, and beyond that, of the identity of Europe and what obligations and responsibilities Europeans will have towards one another”. The ‘crisis’ is therefore connected to the question of the identity of Europe: what is the ‘common thread’ that holds Europeans together and disseminates a feeling of European citizenship?

The search for the European identity, however, appears to be particularly challenging: Jean Monnet’s foremost intention for a united Europe was to overcome the trap of ‘national sovereignty’. In other words, he sought to overcome the model of the modern nation-state which is based around notions of a homogenous culture and the attachment to a clearly defined and demarcated territory. The European Union, however, is often criticized for its failure to

¹ Published in Monnet (1978)

make sense of this ‘dilemma’. It is said to establish a European ‘super-state’ which suppresses Europe’s inner heterogeneity and, in turn, sparks an ever greater opposition between its member states (see Boedeltje, van Houtum: 2008; Murphy: 2013).

The considerations on the ‘European identity crisis’ have revealed that it is of particular importance to assess national public attitudes towards the European identity. On the one hand, this could be enabling in order to identify a common thread among European citizens. On the other hand, it might help to uncover reasons for the growing public dissatisfaction with the working of the European Union and, in effect, propose alternative solutions to the ‘dilemma’ of European identity. How can we thus assess these national public attitudes?

The influential political geographer Anssi Paasi (2001, 22) has argued that “identity and boundaries are two sides of the same coin” since identities are always formed through their relation to the ‘other’. By establishing a demarcation line between ‘us’ and ‘them’, meanings become ascribed. Following this perspective, questions of European identity are importantly connected to the act of border-making for the European Union. In order to uncover public understandings of Europe we might thus assess their attitudes towards the European border policies.

An incident at Europe’s external border recently attracted the attention of the European public: a boat with more than 500 refugees on board, mainly believed to be Eritreans, sank on the 3rd October 2013 in the Mediterranean Sea. The boat caught fire and capsized on its way from Libya to Europe just half a mile off the coast of the Italian island of Lampedusa. While only 150 migrants were rescued by the Italian coast guards, it is estimated that around 300 people died in the attempt to reach the European shores and to claim asylum in the European Union (UNHCR: 2013). The sinking of the migrant boat triggered a great media reaction in the European member states and sparked a general debate on the European border policies. Works in critical geopolitics have asserted that this media debate is of crucial importance for the analysis of public attitudes. As Sharp (2011, 298) points out: “the media are key to understanding the ways in which people understand the world around them, and their place within it [...] because of the unrivalled power such institutions have in narrating global events”. The following dissertation therefore *aims to analyse the media debate on the migrant boat of Lampedusa in order to explore national public understandings of the European identity and border*. In order to do so, the dissertation examines newspaper articles in three different European member states, namely the United Kingdom, Germany and France. These countries are often regarded as the most important voices within the European Union since they represent the biggest economies and greatest numbers of inhabitants among the European member states.

The analysis will focus on one of the leading newspapers in each of these countries, namely *The Guardian* in Britain, *Der Spiegel* in Germany and *Le Monde* in France. These newspapers have one of the highest readerships in each country and are therefore likely to hold an important influence on the public ‘common sense’.

Based on these considerations, four central research questions arise which shall guide the following study:

- *What meanings are ascribed to ‘Europe’ and its border policies in the three national public debates?*
- *How do these meanings differ from each other and how can these differences be explained?*
- *What discontents are expressed with the current status quo of the European Union? What alternations are proposed?*
- *Can a ‘common thread’ of European citizenship be identified?*

The thesis will start off by outlining a theoretical framework for the analysis of national public understandings of Europe. In the first two sections, the European identity will be conceptualized through its external *and* its internal borders. In the third section, I will present a framework for the analysis of geopolitical storylines in newspaper articles with reference to O Tuathail (2002) as well as Edward Said’s (1983) thoughts on the ‘traveling idea’. The third chapter then outlines my methodological approach to the analysis of newspaper articles and their ‘worldly’ context. This will include a discussion on the difficulties I encountered during the research process. In the fourth chapter, I will then present and interpret the analysed storylines on the Lampedusa shipwreck in the newspapers *The Guardian*, *Der Spiegel* and *Le Monde*. In the fifth and final chapter, I will then come back to the introductory remarks by pointing out possible starting points that might allow overcoming the assumed ‘European identity crisis’.

2. The Theoretical Framework: Europe's multiple Borders and Public Discourses

The introductory remarks have indicated that the European Union is stuck in an 'identity crisis': it is said to be unable to yarn a 'common thread' of European citizenship that moves beyond the logic of national sovereignty with clearly demarcated borders and a homogenous culture. These considerations raise three important questions for the analysis of European identity that merit further reflection. First, how are the borders around Europe linked to the European identity? Second, how shall we make sense of the fractures and borders within Europe? Third, how can we assess public attitudes on Europe and its borders?

In the following chapter, I will reflect on each of these questions in more detail by drawing on the academic literature. I will start off by outlining the link between Europe's external borders and its identity in the first section. In the second section, I will then conceptualize Europe's inner fractures and their relation to the European identity. The third section will finally theorize a framework for the analysis of public discourses on the European identity and border.

2.1 Borders around Europe: Constructing European Identity through the Encounter with the 'Other'

Borders have found increasing attention in the field of political geography in the past years. Rather than as natural givens, they are now conceptualized as being central to the ideas of territoriality and identity: only through the establishment of a dividing line between 'inside' and 'outside' or 'us' and the 'them' is it possible to define the meaning of a political territory (see Soja: 2005). Identities are therefore always constructed against the background of an external 'other'.

Highly influential on this revisited concept of the 'border' has been the work of Anssi Paasi (1995, 2001, 2005a). He perceives boundaries as "social, cultural and political constructs that are made meaningful and exploited by human beings as part of the institutionalization process of territories" (Paasi: 2001, 22). Their meaning is never fixed but historically contingent and thus continually in the making. Accordingly, the act of 'bordering' becomes the central focus of academic inquiries (Woodward; Paul: 2005, 239). Moreover, the boundary is seen to hold an "ontological dimension" because "people use emplotted, causal narratives to make sense of their position in the world and through this, they construct their identities and experiences"

(Scuzzarello; Kinnvall: 2013, 93). Boundaries therefore become inscribed and enacted in everyday social practices and extend beyond the actual border line.

In light of this conceptualization of the ‘border’, the current bordering processes of the European Union have found considerable critique in the academic literature. Controversial policies include the establishment of the European border agency Frontex, the European Neighbourhood Programme (ENP), or the confinement of illegal migrants in detention centres (see Vaughan-Williams: 2011; Bibler Coutin: 2010). Scholars have in particular problematized the sealed and militarized nature of the European border towards non-Europeans. In effect of these bordering practices, the EU would increasingly resemble a “fortress” (see van Houtum; Pijpers: 2007, 292).

These considerations on Europe’s bordering processes raise an important question: How does the fortification of Europe’s borders relate to the European self-understanding? Recent academic works have proposed two possible explanations for the link between Europe’s border policies and its identity. First, Europe would reassert a postcolonial identity through colonial modes of government. Second, the European identity might be affected by a ‘globalized fear’ which was sparked by the 9/11 terror attacks. I would like to turn to each of these conceptions in more detail below.

2.1.1 Europe and a Postcolonial Identity

The first line of argument regards the current bordering practices of the EU as re-asserting a colonial identity. This view parallels with work in Postcolonial theory which assumes that the cultural legacies of colonialism are still present in the ways the Western world perceives of itself and its non-Western ‘other’ (see for example Said: 1978).

In this sense, the establishment of a fortified border is seen to reflect and reify notions of societal difference and danger (van Houtum: 2010). The world outside of Europe is seen as ‘threat’ from which the European citizens need to be protected. According to the postcolonial scholar David Slater (2004, 6) this representation of the non-Western world as ‘threat’ dates back to the colonial encounter: it installed a powerful metanarrative in the Western mind which Slater calls ‘Euro-Americanism’. This mode of thinking asserts the superiority of the Western culture and goes hand in hand with negative essentializations of its ‘other’, as Slater (ibid. 11) puts it: “There is an insistent belief in the key historical and geopolitical significance of the West as the essential motor of progress, civilization, modernity and development. This is coupled with a view of the non-West as passive or recalcitrant recipient”. Van Houtum and

Pijpers (2007, 303) argue that the European Union, in effect, increasingly resembles a “gated community” where the common purpose is “the creation of a space in which the nation’s affluent wall and gate themselves off from the rest of the world in an enclave”.

Balibar (1998) further perceives of the European border policies as reproducing colonial technologies of governance. This is said to be particularly visible in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) which aims at outsourcing concerns about illegal migrants to third states (Jones: 2011). In Jones’ view, the ENP is based on European rules and standards which figure as the norm and ideal from which the European ‘outside’ differs negatively. This means that an asymmetrical power-relation between ‘Europe’ and its ‘other’ is established and a notion of ‘Euro-Americanism’ becomes re-asserted. Thereby, the “myths of Western civilization” are reactivated and “the old image of princess Europa as wealthy, free and powerful” is refurbished, as Robins and Morley (1993, 398) argue (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Refurbishing the old image of princess Europa?

By establishing such meanings, the EU is said to follow a modernist logic of ordering space, namely the division of space into discrete, homogeneous nation-states as ‘containers’ of social processes (see Brenner et al.: 2003, 1). Through its fortified border policies, Europe creates a clear line of separation and difference between the superior and enlightened ‘self’ and the dangerous ‘other’. Irregular migration, however, would disturb this understanding of space and

is therefore framed as a ‘problem’ (Heisler: 2001). In consequence, measures are taken to exclude the ‘other’, what Slater (1997, 59) describes as “geopolitical violence”, since “the boundary could be seen as a zone of legitimate dialogue and communication, where differences could be negotiated, but within the frame of European colonialism boundaries established the imposed presence of the Europeans practically and symbolically”.

2.1.2 Europe and a ‘Globalized Fear’

The second line of argument regards the current European border policies as outcome of a ‘globalized fear’ which was installed in the Western worldview after the 9/11 terror attacks. Following Pain (2009, 469), this powerful metanarrative shifts attention to the issue of “how to feign control over the uncontrollable”. It produces easy-to-understand and mobilizing images of dangers ‘out there’ that threaten the stability ‘in here’, what Debrix (2007) describes as ‘Tabloid Imperialism’.

In light of this ‘globalized fear’, terrorist anxieties are said to have become discursively linked up with other contemporary social concerns, such as migration. To speak in Derek Gregory’s (2005, 123; emphasis in original) words, terrorism has been made “polymorphous” since “without defined shape or determinate roots, its mantle can be cast over *any* form of resistance to sovereign power”. From a similar perspective, Huysmans (2006) argues that Western perceptions of migration have been “securitized” in the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks. In consequence, a “politics of fear” was installed which structures social relations on the basis of distrust (ibid. xii).

Many scholars have since interpreted the European border policies as direct effect of the ‘securitization’ of migration following the 9/11 terror attacks. They are said to be characterized by a move away from geopolitics towards the insertion of “biopolitics” (Hyndman: 2012). The primary purpose of the new “biopolitical border” is not to territorialize states but rather to control the mobility of individual bodies. It assumes that mobility can never be nullified and aims to limit, check and regulate the nature and quantity of flows (Kitagawa: 2011, 213).

This control of mobility would be achieved through the increasing use of technical and biometric devices, such as for example the European border surveillance system EUROSUR (see Vaughan-Williams: 2011, 192). Amoore (2006) suggests that the use of such scientific techniques leads to the ‘objectification’ of subjects as they are broken up into calculable risk factors. In effect, “borders are continually (re)inscribed through mobile bodies that can be risk assessed, categorized, and then treated as either ‘trusted travellers’ or ‘bare life’” (Vaughan-Williams: 2011, 195).

The term 'bare life' refers to the works of the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben (1998, 2005) whose radical conceptualizations have had an important influence on the study of Europe's borders. Agamben understands 'bare life' as life which has been stripped off of any rights of citizenship and has thus been 'banned' from law (Agamben: 1998, 63). In consequence, the individual's existence becomes reduced to mere biological life (see Ek: 2006, 366). Agamben regards illegal migrants as primary example of 'bare life' and evokes parallels to the ancient Greek figure of 'homo sacer' who could be killed without punishment but not sacrificed (Agamben: 1998, 47).

Following Agamben's conceptions, the distinction between life that is worth living and 'bare life' is the central pivot of sovereign power (Agamben: 1998, 100). This would find its expression in the creation of a "space of exception", what Agamben calls "The Camp" (ibid. 95). This space hosts "a population of *sub*-humans to whom, precisely for that reason, anything and everything can happen, ostensibly, in the name of law, justice and the defence of freedom in the world outside its walls" (Minca: 2005, 409; emphasis in original). Historically, 'the camp' has found its uttermost expression in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany. In the post 9/11 era, Minca (2007, 79) argues, the camp has returned and a permanent 'state of exception' has become inserted. This has been illustrated by the establishment of detention centres for illegal migrants which have often been discussed in light of Agamben's conceptions (see Papastergiadis: 2006). Kitagawa (2011, 210) asserts that "migrants arriving at the camp [the detention centre] were reduced to a mass without names, voices and individuality, and were unconditionally deported; in Agamben's terms, rendered as bare life and abandoned into a zone of indistinction between citizen and non-citizen".

From this perspective, the European identity is not formed through the creation of a clear demarcation line between the 'self' and its 'other', as postcolonial approaches argue. Instead, 'Europe' is seen to be importantly formed through an abstract fear which became installed in the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks. Paasi (2005b, 581) for example notes that "the 'enemy' in current images does not lie beyond any specific border: rather it is the abstract notion of terrorism that is everywhere".

The preceding paragraphs have presented two conceptualizations of the link between the current border policies of the EU and the European identity. In the introductory remarks, however, I have noted that the European Union is often criticized for being unable to make sense of its inner heterogeneity. Furthermore, the European citizens appear to be increasingly sceptical about the policies of the European Union. The above conceptions, however, are

unable to make sense of these differences and fractures within Europe. In the following section, I would therefore like to turn to the borders *within* Europe.

2.2 Borders within Europe: Constructing European Identity through the Nation-State

Although the Schengen Agreement formally abandoned Europe's inner borders by 1995, the imagined boundaries between the different member states seem to be much more rigid and long-lasting. The persistence of national identities within Europe is in line with Paasi's (2001, 14) view that "regions are political arenas" whose meaning is subject to constant negotiation processes. I would therefore like to conceptualize the link between the European identity and the national identities within Europe in the following section.

The differences between the European member states are often said to hamper the progress of Europeanization since they would impede a common political approach (see Jones, Clark: 2011; Scott: 2009). This line of argument regards the European identity and national identities as conflicting and contradictory entities. A progress of European unity could thus only be achieved through a furthering of Europeanization, i.e. the erasure of national differences and the centralisation of power within the EU.

Bickerton (2011), however, argues that this reasoning is misleading since it would only reinforce the discordances between the member states: they compete over the influence on and content of European policies. Murphy (2013) further suggests that the process of Europeanization is untenable since it implicitly follows the logic of the nation-state. He argues that this was aptly demonstrated by the introduction of the Euro as a common currency. The move towards Monetary Union would have only furthered the differences between its member states as was illustrated by the European debt crisis in 2009: it uncovered the fractures between the seemingly 'homogenous' Euro zone. Murphy (ibid. 719) concludes: "given the continuing significance of national loyalties, it will take more than centralization to produce a commonality of vision". These arguments indicate that the European identity and national identities cannot be considered mutually exclusive. Instead, the European identity must integrate the nation-state.

This assumption is supported by Boomgaarden et al. (2011, 260) who identify a positive correlation between the attachment to the nation-state and the identification with Europe. In other words, if people feel attached to the nation-state and its policies they seem to be more likely to be in favour of the European project. This argument suggests that the European identity and national identities are importantly linked to each other. Such a perspective is also

taken up by Waeber (2005, 59) who argues that “Europe has become increasingly powerful, not as an alternative polity out-competing the nation-states but as a concept increasingly embedded in these nation-states”. Accordingly, the European Union has reshaped national identities and should therefore be understood as integral part of national visions.

These conceptions follow the understanding that national identities as continually changing. This is in line with the view of Brenner et al. (2003, 16) who argue that “a critical engagement with state space must always relate even the most dominant scale(s) to the broader inter-scalar processes through which political geographies are continually constituted and reconstituted”. The European identity and national identities therefore appear to be highly dependent on each other. This is summarized by Moisiu et al. (2013, 744) as follows: “European integration is a social and political process in which ‘Europe’ figures as a differentially articulated concept, vision and project within self-defining national narratives”. National identities should therefore be understood as the political and cultural framework for different ‘readings’ of the European identity (see also Paasi: 2005a, 18).

The major problem for the European Union might therefore be the fact that there is not just one Europe but many competing and overlapping ‘Europes’, as Paasi (2005b, 581) suggests. Since the European identity is dependent on national narratives, different and even contradictory ‘readings’ of Europe could exist in different places. These differences merit further reflection, as Waeber (2005, 59) argues: “We have to operate in a perspectival mode, understanding the different ways the meaningful worlds are constructed which all include ‘Europe’ but in different forms. The internal dynamics of each of these narrative struggles, as well as their mutual relations, have to be grasped to understand the stability and fragility of the complex constellation called Europe”.

Robins and Morley (1995, 399) argue that a collective identity is, however, based on a certain coherence. They thus emphasize the importance of investigating how different ‘Europes’ enter into dialogue. Since the future of the European Union depends on a common ground, it is necessary to not only pay attention to the different narratives on ‘Europe’ but also to the similarities and links between them.

These considerations have suggested that the European identity cannot be understood as homogenous. It should rather be regarded as a ‘political arena’ which is characterized by inner fractures and boundaries. The European identity and national identities might be importantly intermingled and dependent on each other. In order to examine the European identity, it is

therefore of particular importance to assess how ‘Europe’ is framed within different national narratives and, beyond that, what commonalities and differences exist between them.

2.3 Public Discourses on Europe and its Borders

As has been noted in the introductory chapter, the European public is said to be increasingly sceptical about the European policies. In the following section, I would like to sketch out how these public understandings can be grasped in the media. In the first subsection, I will outline the role of the media in framing public views. In the second subsection, I will then conceptualize a framework for the analysis of geopolitical storylines in newspaper articles.

2.3.1 The Media and Public Discourses

The analysis of media representations has been commonly applied in research on popular geopolitics (see for example Sharp: 1996; Dittmer: 2005). This is based on the idea that the media are key to understanding the ways in which people make sense of the world around them (Dittmer; Dodds: 2008, 441). Silverstone (1999, 6), for example, argues that “the media filter and frame everyday realities through their singular and multiple representations, producing touchstones, references, for the conduct of everyday life, for the production and the maintenance of common sense”. In other words, the media create our taken-for-granted understandings of the world and our place within it and thereby determine what counts as ‘common sense’.

Such a perspective is premised on the idea of the “textuality of geopolitics” (O Tuathail: 1996, 63) which understands geopolitics as discourse. The media are seen as powerful institution in the construction of such discourses since they provide “the language through which understandings of the world are communicated, understood and contested” (Sharp: 2011, 298). In order to deconstruct such discursive patterns, we need to investigate how they systematically organise knowledge within them or, so to say, how they delimit what can and what cannot be said about a topic. Chouliaraki (2005, 277) describes such patterns as “politics of truth” which “authorize the meaning horizon within which the topic of debate is understood [...], what it includes and what it excludes as possible knowledge”.

However, I do want to acknowledge academic accounts that emphasize the importance of understanding discourses as language *and* practice (see Mueller: 2008). Such perspectives call for the need to complement media analyses by ethnographic work on audiences in order to understand how media discourses are interpreted and performed (Dittmer; Dodds: 2008).

Although I agree with this view – and do not want to re-assert a notion of structural determinism – the investigation of geopolitical practice will not be the purpose of my study. Instead, I aim to assess the broader patterns of the geopolitical discourses which are *offered* by the media. How these offered storylines are performed should then be investigated in the scope of future enquiries.

2.3.2 A Contextual Framework for the Analysis of Geopolitical Storylines in Media Articles

The preceding considerations have indicated that public attitudes on Europe and its border policies are importantly formed by the media. The empirical analysis will therefore examine the media coverage of the Lampedusa migrant boat in Britain, France and Germany. In order to assess and compare the three media debates, I aim to conceptualize a framework for the analysis of newspaper articles in the following paragraphs.

In a case study on the United States' response to the war in Bosnia, O Tuathail (2002) fruitfully proposes a conceptual framework for the analysis of geopolitical reasoning. I would therefore like to shortly sketch out O Tuathail's conceptions.

According to O Tuathail, media images and representations form the foundation of the political process (see Figure 2 below). He argues that the mass media "create and condition how international crises erupt and are represented as a mini-series of repetitive and occasionally spectacular images and as a constantly updated archive of storylines" (ibid. 607). The produced 'archive of storylines' then informs political leaders and their performed 'geopolitical scripts'. O Tuathail understands of the storyline as a set of arguments which ties different meanings together into a coherent and convincing narrative (ibid. 617). The production of such storylines in the media follows certain rules which he calls the "grammar of geopolitics" (see Figure 3 below). This includes the "categorization" and "particularization" of meanings, as well as the use of analogies, images and metaphors.

He further identifies five questions which form the building blocks of a storyline and are therefore of particular importance for their analysis:

- *WHERE? Location Specification*

This question refers to the specification of different locations as well as to the ways in which different scales, i.e. the local, regional and global, are related to each other (ibid. 610).

- *WHAT? Situation Descriptions*

This refers to “how foreign policy actors classify the drama under consideration and construct scenarios and analogies to render it meaningful” (ibid. 612).

- *WHO? Actor Typifications*

This refers to the ways in which different actors are identified and positioned in relation to each other, often closely connected with blame strategies (ibid. 614).

- *WHY? Attributions and Imputations of Causality (Blame Strategies)*

This refers to the “ways in which actors construct causal relations and explanations of events” (ibid.). The attribution of causality is also closely connected to the assignment of blame on the protagonists.

- *SO WHAT? Strategic Calculation*

The last question refers to how the geostrategic significance of a political issue is calculated (ibid. 616).

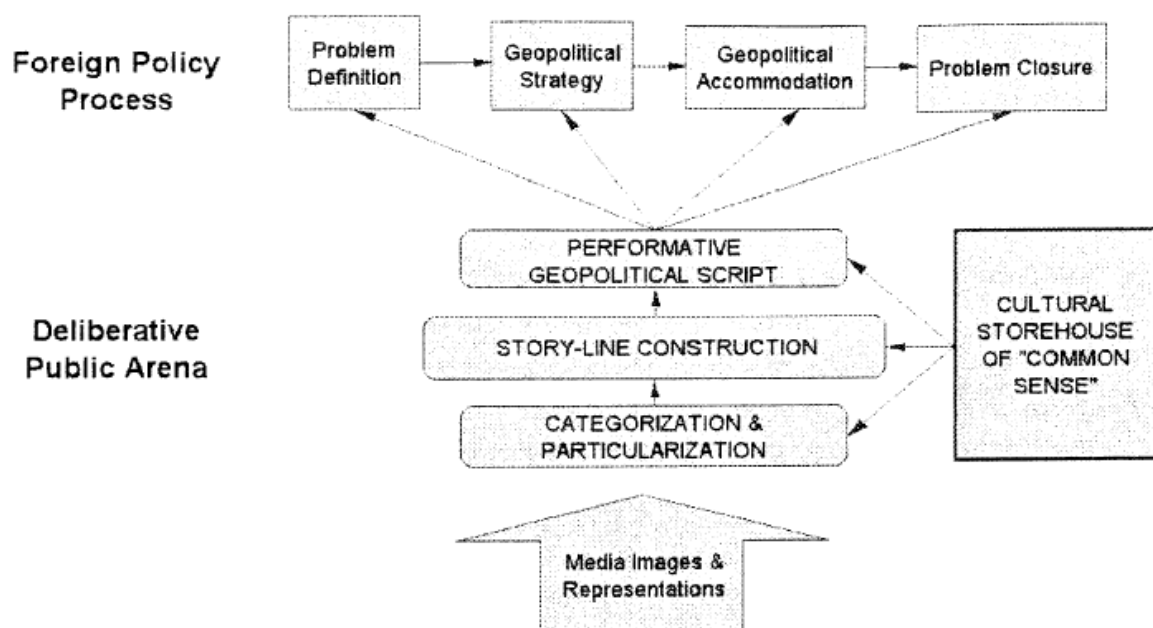


Figure 2: A framework for the analysis of practical geopolitical reasoning (O Tuathail: 2002, 608)

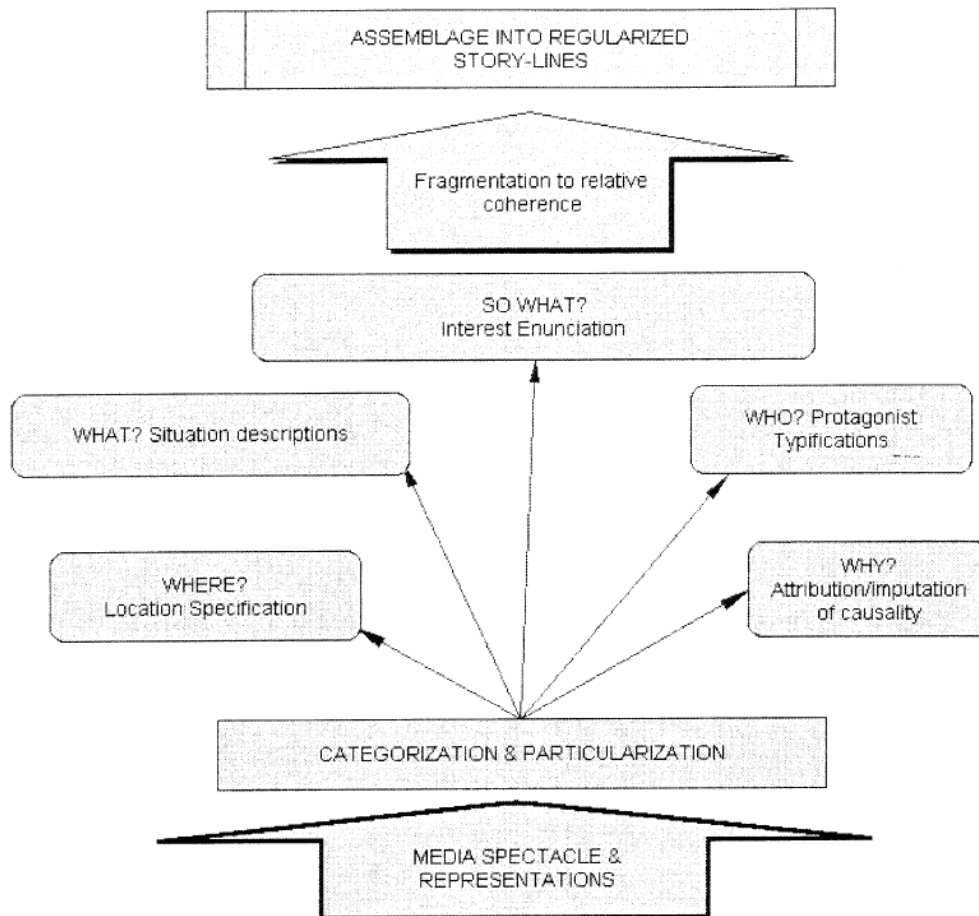


Figure 3: The 'grammar of geopolitics' (O Tuathail: 2002, 609)

O Tuathail (ibid. 617) further acknowledges that most events are characterized by different and competing storylines existing side by side in the public arena in the 'archive of storylines'. Accordingly, each newspaper produces its own storyline by ascribing different meanings to an event. Nevertheless, his framework does not offer any explanation on how these different storylines arise. This, however, is of particular importance for the subsequent empirical analysis since I aim to compare the storylines produced in different national newspapers. How can we then explain how different storylines – and different national public attitudes respectively – come into being?

In order to indicate a possible explanation, I would like to turn to Edward Said's thoughts on the 'worldliness' of texts (1983). Said (ibid. 4) argues: "My position is that texts are worldly, to some degree they are events, and even when they appear to deny it, they are nevertheless a part of the social world, human life, and of course the historical moments in which they are located". Following this perspective, texts – and newspaper articles respectively – do not exist in a 'cultural vacuum'. Instead, they are part of the 'reality' of the world and should therefore always be read in their social, cultural and political context (see also Burney: 2012, 117).

Based on these thoughts, Said (1983, 230) conceptualizes the “traveling theory”. He argues that a theory or idea changes as it travels from one location or point in time to another. As it transverses different contexts, it gets modified by and adapts to the new circumstances. In consequence, “no reading is neutral or innocent, and by the same token every text and every reader is to some extent the product of a theoretical standpoint” (ibid. 242). However, I would like to note that I do not assume that there is an indefinite number of readings or theoretical standpoints. Rather, we should think of groups of people responding similar to ‘ideas’ – or, in Fish’s (1976) words, of “interpretive communities”. These communities can be understood as “social collectivities that imbue similar meanings to texts, largely because they have acquired specific cultural competencies as a consequence of their particular social location” (Dittmer; Dodds: 2008, 446).

These considerations allow us to refine O Tuathail’s framework for the purpose of this study. Said’s conceptualizations on the ‘traveling idea’ offer a potential explanation for the production of different geopolitical storylines on the same event. This indicates that media representations cannot be seen as the foundation of the political process, as proposed by O Tuathail. Rather, they themselves could be conditioned by their ‘worldliness’, i.e. the social and historical context of their production. Accordingly, the readership as well as the journalists of a particular newspaper might form an ‘interpretive community’ which ascribes similar meanings to ‘Europe’. What follows from these considerations is that ‘Europe’ itself might be understood as a ‘traveling idea’ whose meaning changes as it is inserted in different ‘worldly’ context. This, however, needs further investigation in the empirical analysis.

The theoretical considerations in this chapter have important implications for the subsequent empirical analysis. The first section has illustrated the relevance of assessing public attitudes towards Europe’s border policies since they might be importantly connected to public understandings of Europe. The purpose of this study is therefore to examine public views on the Lampedusa migrant boat which sank at the European border. Moreover, I have proposed two possible explanations for the link between the European border policies and the European identity which should be investigated in the empirical analysis: the re-assertion of a postcolonial identity and the powerful metanarrative of a ‘globalized fear’.

The second section of this chapter has then indicated that the inner fractures within Europe are important for the examination of the European identity. It might be inextricably connected with national identities. The purpose of the following analysis is therefore to assess how ‘Europe’ is embedded in national narratives in Germany, Britain and France.

In the third section, I have then outlined the role of the media in framing public views. The subsequent analysis will thus assess newspaper articles in order to uncover public understandings of 'Europe'. Said's considerations on the 'traveling idea' have further indicated that the peculiar storylines produced in each newspaper might be importantly influenced by its 'worldliness'. Based on these conceptions, I aim to analyse the storylines on the background of their social and historical context of production.

3. Methodological Considerations: Analysing Newspaper Articles and their ‘Worldliness’

The aim of this study is to assess national public understandings of Europe and its borders by analysing articles on the 3rd October 2013 Lampedusa shipwreck in the three newspapers *The Guardian* (Britain), *Der Spiegel* (Germany) and *Le Monde* (France). Before presenting the findings of the empirical analysis in Chapter 4, I would like to outline and discuss my methodological approach in the following paragraphs.

First of all, I want to emphasize that I do not attempt to present a complete picture of public understandings of ‘Europe’. Due to the limited scope of this study, the research process involved different selection processes which I would like to acknowledge. First, the analysis focused on the understandings of Europe in the member states France, Germany and Britain. The meanings articulated in the remaining 25 member states have thereby been excluded. In addition, the three selected countries might all be considered as ‘Central European’ and as presenting an important position in the European Union. Eastern or Southern European states, however, might articulate a completely different storyline on the Lampedusa shipwreck what merits investigation in future research.

A second selection process unavoidably reduced the diversity of public understandings of Europe. This study focused on one newspaper in France, Britain and Germany what means that the analysis cannot be considered representative for the plurality of different views present in each of these countries. Nevertheless, I selected newspapers that appear to be particularly influential on the national public view and are comparable to each other. Both, the British daily newspaper *The Guardian* and the French daily newspaper *Le Monde* (literally ‘The World’), have one of the highest circulations in the respective countries and consider themselves to articulate a centrist/left-of-centre political view (see Audit Bureau of Circulation: 2013; *Le Monde*: 2009). The weekly news magazine *Der Spiegel* is the biggest of its kind in Germany and considers itself as independent of any political party (Spiegel-Gruppe: 2014a). In addition, each of the three newspapers operates the leading online news platform in the respective country, namely ‘Spiegel Online’ in Germany (Spiegel-Gruppe: 2014b), ‘theguardian.com’ in Britain (see *The Guardian*: 2012) and ‘lemonde.fr’ in France (see INA Global: 2010). Due to their national importance, the newspapers are thus likely to mirror what counts as public ‘common sense’ and do not articulate extreme views.

Furthermore, I have already acknowledged that I agree with approaches that emphasize the importance of regarding discourses as language *and* practice (see Mueller: 2008). Nevertheless, I do understand the meanings produced in the media articles as a framework for concrete practices since they determine the “storehouse of common sense” (O Tuathail: 2002), as was discussed in Chapter 2. Their performativity, however, should be investigated in the scope of another inquiry.

With these considerations in mind, I would now like to outline the concrete process of analysing articles in the three newspapers. In a first step, I aimed to assess the ‘worldly’ context in which the Lampedusa shipwreck was inserted in each of the three newspapers. This functioned as the fundament for the subsequent analyses of storylines on the Lampedusa shipwreck. Said (1983) has argued that texts – and newspaper articles respectively – do not exist in a ‘cultural vacuum’ but form part of the historical and contemporary context of their production. This suggests that each of the three storylines has to be analysed jointly with its distinctive social and historical context.

Yet, it is crucial to note that I do not claim to provide a full picture of the complex social and historical context in each of the countries. This would not only exceed the scope of this thesis but is also never possible since it can only ever be considered incomplete. The following contextual analyses therefore only aim to provide possible starting points that might be of importance for the purpose of this study. The examination of the ‘worldly’ context thus unavoidably involved the reduction of complexities. In order to reduce the subjectivity involved in this process, I tried to move back and forth between the contextual analyses and the analyses of newspaper articles on the Lampedusa shipwreck. This allowed filtering the contextual factors in compliance with the meanings ascribed to the migrant boat. The analysis of the contemporary context was based on a skim reading of articles in the weeks preceding and following the sinking of the migrant boat on the 3rd October 2013. This helped to identify recurring topics and events which were of particular importance in the news coverage in the respective time frame. The identified contextual patterns were then supplemented by academic works on the historical geopolitical reasoning in each of the countries in order to acknowledge historical factors that appear to be of importance.

In the second step of the research process, I then assessed the geopolitical storylines on the Lampedusa shipwreck in each of the three newspapers. This analysis covered all articles which were directly related to the incident in the printed and online versions of the newspapers. In order to compile the relevant articles, I skim read all printed editions published in the weeks following the 3rd of October. In addition, I made use of the archival search function on the

online news platform what allowed to compile articles published online. In effect, a total number of 109 articles were pooled for the analysis (for a full list see index in viii.).

The analysis of newspaper articles was based on the central questions proposed by O Tuathail (2002). These questions were used for a coding of the compiled articles. Respectively, the following five codes were deployed: WHERE?, WHAT?, WHO?, WHY, and SO WHAT?. Repeatedly articulated meanings were then compiled to each of the five codes (see Appendix). This process allowed the deconstruction of the three storylines in a comparative manner.

The coding and subsequent compilation of meanings, however, appeared to be particularly challenging since it involved the reduction of information through the establishment of neat categories. Quotes and meanings were unavoidably detached from their context. This process of extracting meanings is therefore subjective and involves a certain danger of re-asserting pre-established hypotheses. In order to diminish these biases, I aimed to identify repeatedly recurring patterns. As Sharp (2000, 50) has argued, it is only through constant repetition that meanings are consolidated and become 'common sense'. The search for recurring patterns also allows the exclusion of 'outliers' which might only be the product of an individual author's opinion. Special attention has also been paid to the headlines of the articles since they condense meanings into a convincing catchphrase in order to spark the attention of the reader.

In the third step of the analysis, I then drew the meanings affiliated to the five codes back together in order to describe and interpret the articulated storyline. I will present these storylines in the second subsections of chapter 4. In order to interpret the identified patterns, I aimed to connect the articulated meanings back to the contextual analysis. This process, however, appeared to be particularly challenging since it ran in risk of re-asserting contextual characteristics. In order to diminish this bias, I tried to move back and forth between the contextual analysis and the analysis of newspaper articles. Connections thus emerged and changed with the progress of the research process. Nevertheless, the presented links can only be understood as tentative. For their validation, further research that investigates the presumed relationships is needed. Moreover, it is important to note that I do not want to re-assert a notion of historical determinism, i.e. the perception of contemporary patterns as historically predetermined. Such a view would be deterministic and unable to explain change. I tried to avoid this error by relating the articulated storylines not only to historical patterns but also to the contemporary social and political context identified in the contextual analyses.

Finally, I want to acknowledge that the findings presented in the following chapter might still be influenced by my own subjectivity and personal background. Scholars have often emphasized that the research process can never be value-free and objective (see England:

1994). My positionality as a 'German' might thus have had important bearings on the analysis. This background allowed me, on the one hand, to have a special understanding and sensitivity for the 'worldliness' of the German newspaper articles. On the other hand, my German standpoint could have distorted my understandings of the storylines in *The Guardian* and *Le Monde* since I do not form part of the respective 'interpretive communities'. A person who has grown up in Britain or France might thus interpret the storylines and their articulated meanings differently.

4. The Empirical Analysis: Geopolitical Storylines on the 2013 Lampedusa Shipwreck in Britain, Germany and France

The central aim of this project is to assess national public understandings of ‘Europe’ and its borders in Britain, Germany and France. For this purpose, I analysed the geopolitical storylines in one of the most important newspaper in each of the respective. I will present these storylines in the following three sections. In each of the first subsections, I would like to shortly sketch out contextual characteristics that might be of importance for the storylines on the Lampedusa shipwreck. In the second subsections, I will then present and discuss the geopolitical storylines on the migrant boat in each of the respective newspapers. In the fourth section, I will finally summarize the findings of the analyses and suggest that Europe should be understood as a ‘traveling idea’.

4.1 Britain’s Abstention: The Geopolitical Storyline in The Guardian

4.1.1 The ‘Worldly’ Context of Production

Edward Said’s considerations on the ‘worldliness’ of texts have indicated that we need to assess the social and historical context of the newspaper articles in order to understand the peculiar storyline on the Lampedusa shipwreck. In the following paragraphs, I would therefore like to sketch out contextual factors that seem to have a bearing on the articulated storyline. This will be based on the national and international news coverage in *The Guardian* in the weeks preceding and following the sinking of the migrant boat. I will then complement the identified patterns by academic works on the historical geopolitical discourse in Britain.

The national news coverage of *The Guardian* in the weeks preceding and following the 3rd October 2013 tends to describe the economic and social situation in Britain with a rather pessimistic and critical undertone. Articles report on the rising living costs in the country (The Guardian: 25/09/2013a), the decreasing level of education in the society (The Guardian: 08/10/2013) or the drastic decrease in economic productivity (The Guardian: 18/09/2013a). Questions of migration or integration, however, do not seem to be of great importance in the national news section since only a handful of articles report on this topic. Almost all of these articles focus on the efficiency of the British border control (see The Guardian: 25/09/2013b; The Guardian: 04/10/2013). One article, for example, debates the effectiveness of the UK e-

border scheme in order to stop terror suspects and criminals from entering the UK (The Guardian: 09/10/2013a). This could be seen as a first indication for a discursive connection between terrorism and migration and the insertion of a 'globalized fear' (Pain: 2009) as has been described in the theoretical framework.

Moreover, relatively few articles report on the European Union what suggests that it is of minor importance for the news coverage in *The Guardian*. Almost all of these articles describe the EU with a negative undertone. An article for example reports on the austerity in Europe which is seen to push it into social and economic decline (The Guardian: 10/10/2013). It is argued that "whilst other continents successfully reduce poverty, Europe adds to it" (ibid.). The British role in the EU is also described with a pessimistic tone. One article problematizes the economic situation in Britain and asks: "Is Britain back to being the sick man in Europe?" (The Guardian: 18/09/2013b).

The articles in *The Guardian* thus appear to articulate a rather sceptical attitude towards the EU. This parallels with academic works on the historical geopolitical discourse in Britain which trace the relatively isolated course in Europe back to the 19th century. During this time, Dijkink (1996, 38) argues, the British foreign policies were primarily directed towards its colonies overseas whereas its European neighbours were perceived to be of minor importance for the state. According to Taylor (1993, 76), this geopolitical discourse continued after the Second World War: Britain has importantly oriented itself towards the U.S. what allowed the British to uphold the illusion of a global hegemonic position despite the loss of their colonial Empire. A similar view is put forward by Dijkink (1996, 44) who argues: "For the British, the new-Anglo-American partnership meant the continuance of the illusion of separation and difference with regard to Europe". This is said to be aptly illustrated by the political approach under former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher who pursued an anti-common market strategy with the EU (see van der Wusten, Dijkink: 2002, 31). The political course of action in the recent past seems to suggest the continuance of this isolationist position on the European continent. The United Kingdom does neither form part of the Schengen Agreement nor the European Monetary Union. Moreover, it was critical of the European Eastern enlargement in 2004 and 2007 and, in effect, posed restrictions on the access of Romanians and Bulgarians to labour markets since it feared a 'migration wave' (Light, Young: 2009).

The international news coverage of *The Guardian* extensively debates the budget dispute in the US-American congress and the subsequent 'shutdown' (see for example The Guardian: 01/10/2013a). Moreover, the international news coverage is dominated by reports on the deteriorating situation in the Arab world. Articles for example report on the firing of rockets

and car bombs in Pakistan (The Guardian: 26/09/2013), the killing of protesters in Cairo (The Guardian: 07/10/2013) or the oppression of women in Arab countries (The Guardian: 29/09/2013; 09/10/2013b). Moreover, the exploitation and ill-treatment of construction workers in Qatar hits the front pages for several days in early October (see for example The Guardian: 01/10/2013b).

This emphasis indicates the special importance of the U.S. for the British word view, as has been argued by works on the historical geopolitical discourse in Britain (see Taylor: 1993). On the one hand, this is illustrated by the assumption that American issues, such as the ‘shutdown, seem to hold a special place in the news coverage in *The Guardian*. Moreover, the Arab world seems to be regarded as the global ‘trouble spot’ what resonates with the assumption that Islamist countries represent the primary ‘enemy’ in the American geopolitical discourse (see Debrix: 2008). However, this image might also be connected to the special relevance of terrorism in the British context since it was directly affected by Islamist terror attacks. In July 2005, bombings in the London underground killed 53 people what, subsequently brought the question of public safety on the top of the political agenda in Britain.

The contextual analysis revealed several important aspects for the subsequent analysis of newspaper articles on the Lampedusa shipwreck. On the one hand, Britain seems to hold a relatively sceptical and isolated position towards the European Union. On the other hand, a special importance appears to be attributed to the U.S., the Muslim world and the issue of terrorism.

4.1.2 The Geopolitical Storyline on the Lampedusa Shipwreck

In order to uncover British public narratives on Europe and its border, I analysed the geopolitical storyline on the Lampedusa migrant boat in the British newspaper *The Guardian*. A total number of 26 newspaper articles was compiled, coded and analysed. An overview of the coded meanings is presented in Table 1 at the end of this subsection. In the following paragraphs, I would like to present the analysed storyline on the Lampedusa shipwreck as well as to interpret my findings by resorting back to the theoretical framework and the contextual analysis.

Immigration as a Matter of National Sovereignty:

The articles clearly connect the Lampedusa migrant boat to the European Union. They locate the incident at “Italy’s southern shores, a key entry point to the European Union” (The Guardian: 03/10/2013b). The Italian border is seen as the “promised land for thousands of

Africans fleeing war and poverty who aspire to new lives, usually in northern Europe” (The Guardian: 06/10/2013b). Nevertheless, the articles do not conceive the migrant boat primarily as a European ‘problem’. Rather, it becomes foremost an Italian concern and is directly attributed to the Italian border policies. As the above quotes indicate, a notion of the Italian island of Lampedusa as a ‘weak point’ in the European border is evoked. This is further emphasized by the extensive reporting on the Italian political debate in the aftermath of the shipwreck. All articles except a few discuss the responses of Italian government officials as well as the legal situation in Italy. The political debate which was sparked within the European Union, in contrast, is only randomly mentioned.

Moreover, the Italian government is repeatedly blamed for its harsh immigration policies which are seen as primary cause for the drowning of hundreds of migrants. The former Berlusconi administration, for example, is criticized for its agreements with the Libyan government under Gaddafi, its push-backs of refugees in need of protection, as well as for a law which turns migrants into criminals (see The Guardian: 04/10/2013b). In effect, the Italian government is said to encourage “trafficking by criminal organisations, while discouraging open water rescue for fishermen, who fear being accused of aiding and abetting” (The Guardian: 04/10/2013b). These articulated meanings parallel with the patterns identified in the contextual analysis. It was indicated that the European Union is of relatively low importance for Britain. Moreover, Britain does not form part of the Schengen Agreement what means that immigration is still first and foremost a matter of national politics. This understanding of immigration as a matter of national sovereignty seems to be transferred to the Italian state in the articulated storyline. In this regard, the Italian state is seen as primarily responsible for the shipwreck and thus for securing its own borders rather than the European Union.

A sceptical view on the European Union:

The responsibility of Europe, in contrast, is regarded from an ambivalent stance. In a handful of articles, Europe is seen as complicit in the deaths since it does not show any solidarity for the Italian government. One author seems to be particularly critical of the European Union and argues that “the EU’s attitude to migrants will be its own undoing” and “the EU itself has become barbaric” (The Guardian: 10/10/2013b). Other articles, however, repeatedly devalue the call of Italian government for help from the European Union. Italy’s claim for a fairer share of migrants, for example, is said to be unjustified since the country takes in only a small amount of asylum seekers in comparison to northern European states (The Guardian: 09/10/2013). Such a line of argument evokes the notion of a cynical Italian government that tries to take advantage

of the Lampedusa shipwreck in order to manipulate the European Union for its own advantage. The EU is therefore perceived as a political entity which is mobilised by its member states for their own ends. This pattern seems to strengthen the assumption of a euro-sceptical view among the British public.

The low identification with the EU is further illustrated by the fact that the Lampedusa migrant boat is not perceived as a direct concern for Britain. Only one author directly relates the shipwreck to Britain in a short paragraph. He argues: “If the Lampedusa boat had landed safely, the next wave of stories would have warned of the hordes now heading across Europe; destination Britain” (The Guardian: 04/10/2013c). Further feelings of a British responsibility or affection are not evoked by the storyline. This indicates that the British public does not identify itself with European problems or policies and, in effect, that it does not consider itself as a part of ‘Europe’. I have noted that scholars such as Waeber (2005) argue that European and national identities are inextricably connected. This view, however, seems to not be paralleled by the storyline articulated in *The Guardian*.

The Lampedusa shipwreck as ‘tragedy’:

The sinking of the migrant boat is further framed as a dramatic and horrific event. This is demonstrated by the frequent use of metaphors such as ‘disaster’, ‘tragedy’ or ‘shame’. Five articles directly feature the metaphor of a “tragedy” in their headlines (see for example The Guardian: 08/10/2013b). This notion is furthered by pictures that portray hundreds of coffins lined up in a hangar (see Figure 4 below). Moreover, articles repeatedly assert that the “boat sinking was no accident” (The Guardian: 04/10/2013b) and frame it as a “slaughter of innocents” (The Guardian: 03/10/2013a). This evokes the notion that the deaths could have been prevented if only a better border management was in place.

The illegal migrants who lost their lives at Lampedusa are therefore presented as helpless and innocent victims of political inadequacies (see Figure 5). Through the frequent use of eye witnesses’ reports and the narration of migrant stories, compassion and pity for the destiny of the illegal migrants is generated. An article for example describes the “hellish journey” which Villa and his friend had to go through in order to reach Europe (The Guardian: 06/10/2013b). Such reports also evoke a feeling of identification with the dead migrants what is best illustrated by the quote of a diver who laments a dead child with the words “it could have been my son” (The Guardian: 07/10/2013).



Figure 4: The notion of a 'tragedy'



Figure 5: The image of the innocent and helpless migrant

These meanings indicate that neither postcolonial views on the European identity nor notions of a 'globalized fear' seem to be able to explain the articulated storyline. As has been outlined in chapter 2, a postcolonial perspective assumes that the European identity is constructed through an antagonistic relationship and a clear demarcation line with an inferior and dangerous 'other' (see for example Slater: 2004). This assumption, however, appears to be deliberately subverted in the articulated storyline. The illegal migrants are portrayed as helpless and

innocent and identification with their destinies is sparked. In effect, the boundary between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ is blurred and the modernist logic of ordering space into discrete containers (Brenner et al.: 2013) undermined.

Moreover, a postcolonial perspective assumes that ‘Europe’ is portrayed as the “essential motor of progress, civilization, modernity and development”, as Slater (2004, 6) has argued in his conceptions of ‘Euro-Americanism’. In the context of the Lampedusa shipwreck, however, the European governments are presented as incompetent and their policies as failed. This further questions a postcolonial view on the European identity since it indicates that ‘Europe’ is portrayed as faulty instead as superior.

The conception of a ‘globalized fear’ (Pain: 2009) also appears to be unable to explain the articulated meanings. Scholars such as Huysmans (2006) and Paasi (2005b) argue that the topic of migration became discursively linked up with an abstract fear of terrorism in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. In the articulated storyline, however, the illegal migrants are presented as helpless and innocent rather than as potential terrorists who spark fear and danger. Moreover, the generation of identification and compassion questions perspectives on the “biopolitical border” (Hyndman: 2012). Kitagawa (2011, 210), with reference to Agamben, has argued that “migrants arriving at the camp were reduced to a mass without names, voices and individuality”. The storyline in *The Guardian*, however, does not parallel this view. Articles repeatedly recount the migrant’s stories, such as Villa’s (The Guardian: 06/10/2013b) and generate individuality.

The notion of a ‘boat people crisis’:

Moreover, the Lampedusa migrant boat is repeatedly interpreted as part of a “boat people crisis” (The Guardian: 13/10/2013b). Around a third of the articles invoke notions of a ‘migration wave’ of thousands of Africans trying to reach Europe (see Figure 6 below). The urgency of the perceived ‘crisis’ is emphasized by the repeated use of statistical numbers and figures (see The Guardian: 03/10/2013c). A renewed sinking of a migrant boat on the 11th October is framed as a stark confirmation for the fact that “boats continue to arrive in a wave that has not relented” (The Guardian: 12/10/2013b). Moreover, an article reports on the situation in Libya by arguing that “there are so many African migrants in Libya wanting to make the dangerous trip to Europe that Tripoli zoo has been turned into a processing centre for them” (The Guardian: 13/10/2012a). These meanings parallel with Debrix’ (2007) conceptions of a ‘Tabloid Imperialism’. He argues that this discourse was installed in the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks and produces mobilizing images of dangers ‘out there’ that threaten the

stability 'in here'. In effect, the notion of a 'globalized fear' would be sparked. The articulated storyline also appears to produce such an image by asserting that thousands of migrants would be waiting 'out there' to soon 'overrun' the European continent. The might spark feelings of fear and danger among the public. The notion of a 'migration wave' could also present a justification for the securitization of the borders of 'Fortress Europe'. This, however, is regarded from an ambivalent stance: a handful of articles also emphasize the need for a less restrictive asylum policy (The Guardian: 04/10/2013b).



Figure 6: "Migrants dock at Lampedusa...13,000 have arrived there so far this year"

Such images of a 'boat people crisis' seem to parallel the argument of a "securitization" of migrant issues in the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks. This might be connected to the empathy with the U.S., the notion of the Muslim world as 'trouble spot' as well as the experience of terrorist attacks in Britain, as was indicated in the contextual analysis.

	The Shipwreck in <i>The Guardian</i>
WHERE?	Lampedusa as a ‘weak point’ in the European border; A matter of Italian importance
WHAT?	A “tragedy”, “disaster” and “shame”; Part of a “boat people crisis”;
WHO?	The illegal migrants as innocent victims; The Italian state as culprit which is unable to put in place a fair approach to asylum; The EU is mobilised for Italy’s own ends / The EU is complicit in the deaths (ambivalent)
WHY?	Failure of the Italian government to secure its borders; The EU refuses help to the Italian state (ambivalent)
SO WHAT?	Part of a ‘migration wave’; An ‘emergency situation’ that demands urgent action

Table 1: The Analysed Geopolitical Storyline in *The Guardian*

4.2 Germany’s Guilt: The Geopolitical Storyline in *Der Spiegel*

4.2.1 The ‘Worldly’ Context of Production

The preceding analysis has indicated that contextual factors play an important role for the meanings ascribed to the Lampedusa shipwreck in *The Guardian*. This eschews the question of whether the storyline in *Der Spiegel* differs and whether these differences could be explained by their distinctive ‘worldly’ context. I would thus like to shortly sketch out the peculiar context of the storyline in *Der Spiegel* in the following paragraphs.

In the weeks preceding and following the sinking of the migrant boat on the 3rd October 2013, the national news section of *Der Spiegel* was dominated by a discussion on the German federal election held on the 22nd September as well as the coalition talks in its aftermath. With 42% of all votes, the liberal-conservative party CDU saw its greatest victory since 1990. In consequence, Chancellor Angela Merkel was re-elected for the next legislative period. These results have generally been discussed with a positive undertone in the articles in *Der Spiegel*. Angela Merkel was regarded as the strong and powerful ‘mother’ of Germany (*Der Spiegel*: 21/09/2013a). Her policies are said to have led to a “brilliant economic situation in Germany” (*Der Spiegel*: 21/10/2013). Merkel’s victory is also linked to her special role in the European

Union, as she is seen as being able to shape the direction of European politics and as holding a powerful position in Europe (Der Spiegel: 28/10/2013a). Another article attributes this special power to her role of an ‘intermediary’ which is said to have led to a strong Euro and a common European financial and economic policy (Der Spiegel: 21/10/2013).

These patterns seem to parallel academic works on the historical geopolitical discourse in Germany. Scholars such as Waeber (2005) have argued that ‘Europe’ plays an important role in the German world view. This is often traced back to Germany’s historical ‘Sonderweg’ (‘special path’) which involved the initiation of two world wars. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the newly formed Federal Republic of Germany distanced itself importantly from the mistakes of the past. Politicians emphasized that never again a war would start from German territory. They rejected any notions of a German ‘special path’ by binding the state to every possible international institution, such as the European Economic Commission and the NATO. In effect, ‘Westintegration’ and a feeling of guilt came to be at the heart of German politics as Bach and Peters (2002, 5) argue. This is supported by the notion that German politicians showed a special ambition for the progress of European integration. For instance, the former German chancellor Helmut Kohl fundamentally contributed to the enactment of the Schengen Agreement which abandoned Europe’s internal borders. Moreover, Germany is said to have played an important part in many other European advancements such as the Monetary Union (Siebold: 2013).

Moreover, the self-confident German perception of its role in the European Union seems to parallel Bach and Peters (2002, 10) view that Germany now “considers itself adult and mature, yet reasonable and sensitive”. They argue that Germany has regained its full sovereignty and confidence with its reunification in 1990. The German self-perception as an ‘intermediary’ in the EU is further said to be connected to the German ‘Mittellage’ (‘middle position’) during the Cold War as it was directly affected by the East-West divide (ibid. 11). Thus, Germany did not only pursue its political ‘Westintegration’ but also a dialogue with the Soviet Union. This became implemented in the ‘Ostpolitik’ which aimed for the political rapprochement with the East over several decades. As the articles above indicate, this ‘intermediary’ position has continued to characterize the German self-perception.

Of particular importance in the news coverage of *Der Spiegel* further appear to be questions of immigration and integration which represent a repeatedly discussed topic. The major issue in this context seems to be the extent to which migrants should assimilate to the German society. An article, for example, debates whether Turkish public servants should be allowed to wear a headscarf at their workplace (Der Spiegel: 26/09/2013). Another article discusses the question

of whether the government should introduce the dual citizenship for Germans with a migrant background (Der Spiegel: 28/10/2013).

Several contextual factors that might be of importance for the storyline on the Lampedusa shipwreck in *Der Spiegel* have been identified in this subsection. In contrast to Britain, 'Europe' seems to be of major importance for German politics. Moreover, articles on the role of Chancellor Angela Merkel in Europe indicate that the German position in the EU is viewed with a high level of self-confidence.

4.2.2 *The Geopolitical Storyline on the Lampedusa Shipwreck*

The analysis of the storyline on the Lampedusa shipwreck in the news magazine *Der Spiegel* aimed to investigate understandings of Europe and its borders among the German public. It covered a total number of 42 articles. For a summary of the coded meanings see Table 2 below. In the following paragraphs, I would like to present and interpret the analysed geopolitical storyline.

Immigration as a European matter:

In contrast to the storyline in *The Guardian*, the articles in *Der Spiegel* immediately debate the sinking of the migrant boat as of primary importance for Europe. The island of Lampedusa is regarded as the "gate to Europe" (Der Spiegel: 03/10/2013a) and "Europe's southernmost outpost" (Der Spiegel: 03/10/2013c). The incident is therefore framed as a concern for Europe as a whole what the following quote aptly demonstrates: "Entire Europe is shocked about what has happened" (Ibid.). In effect, not the Italian political debate but the European Union and its immigration and border policies come to be the primary focus of attention in almost all articles. The deaths at sea are thus framed as direct outcomes of political inadequacies within the European Union. This is demonstrated by the fact that the incident is repeatedly interpreted as a symbol for the "failure of Europe" (Der Spiegel: 03/10/2013c). The European leaders are directly blamed for the incident and the EU is presented as the 'culprit' of the deaths. Most articles therefore openly criticize the nature of the European immigration and border policies. Around ten articles blame the inability of the European countries to enact a common European asylum policy. In this context, the Dublin Regulation – which identifies the country responsible for processing asylum claims as the one through which a person first entered the European Union – is highly problematized. It is seen as an excuse for Central European countries to refuse help to countries most affected by illegal immigration, such as Italy (see Der Spiegel:

09/10/2013b). In addition, the “fiction of Fortress Europe” (Der Spiegel: 03/10/2013c) is also repeatedly criticized (see Figure 7 below). The European Union is blamed for its lack of receptiveness, its unwillingness to provide legal means of entry to people in need, and its disrespect for the right to asylum (Der Spiegel: 08/10/2013a; Der Spiegel: 03/10/2013a).



Figure 7: Critique at the ‘Fiction of Fortress Europe’

These meanings indicate that the migrant boat becomes importantly linked to the European Union and its immigration policies in *Der Spiegel*. The identified patterns suggest that in Germany, in contrast to Britain, questions of asylum and immigration are not regarded primary as a matter of national sovereignty but instead as responsibility of the European Union. This appears to be in line with the assumptions of the contextual analysis which indicated that ‘Europe’ is of great importance for Germany.

A visionary identity of ‘Europe’:

The shipwreck also eschews farer-reaching questions on the design and values of ‘Europe’. The European leaders are repeatedly presented as stubborn and unwilling to show solidarity for each other (see Der Spiegel: 08/10/2013d). This notion is aptly illustrated in the following quote: “Outside of the conference room, it becomes clear what the actual construction failure of the community of states is – no matter if it is about the Euro or about human beings, the big picture splits up into the fussy national too quickly” (Der Spiegel: 08/10/2013d). Based on this critique, the fundamental need for a European solidarity and a better co-operation between the member states is asserted.

The European Union is further blamed for not implementing its fundamental values, as the following quote indicates: “to look the other way and to let people sail into their death disregards our European values” (Der Spiegel: 04/10/2013b). These European values appear to mainly be understood as the protection of human rights what is illustrated by the notion that “respect for human dignity, which is the fundamental mission of the EU, would demand us not to talk about numbers but to help these people” (Der Spiegel: 14/10/2013c).

These meanings suggest that a vision of ‘Europe’ does exist in the German context. The imagined ‘Europe’ is a space which is characterized by the protection of human rights, its receptiveness for people in need of help and solidarity between the European states. The status quo of the EU, however, is criticized for not being in line with this vision. These assumptions support the argument that the German public, in contrast to the British, importantly identifies itself with ‘Europe’ (see Waever, 2005; Bach, Peters: 2002).

The German responsibility for the European Union:

In the articles in *Der Spiegel*, the migrant shipwreck does not only become a European ‘problem’ but is also interpreted as being of major relevance for Germany. Around a half of the articles discusses the responsibility of the German government for the deaths and reports on the domestic political debate which was sparked in the aftermath of the sinking (see Der Spiegel: 09/10/2013e). Moreover, the shipwreck is discussed as a major issue for the coalition talks of the governmental parties in the aftermath of the German federal elections (see for example Der Spiegel: 10/10/2013a). This importance for Germany is reinforced by the fact that the shipwreck triggers large protests and demonstrations in Hamburg and Berlin from October 15 onwards (see Figure 8 below). An article, for example, reports on the protests in Berlin by arguing that: “the drama of Lampedusa has consequences for Germany: via the Italian island, refugees move to Berlin and Hamburg” (Der Spiegel: 16/10/2013). Four articles also report on the “Lampedusa Group”, a group of striking refugees in Hamburg, who trigger major public demonstrations for immediate changes in the German and European immigration policies (see Spiegel: 17/10/2013).

This perception of the shipwreck as European and simultaneously German ‘problem’ supports the assumption that the German public importantly identifies itself with ‘Europe’. European problems are framed as German problems and vice versa. This parallels with the view that the German and the European identity are inextricably connected and that ‘Europe’ can only be understood through national narratives (see Moisiu et al: 2013; Paasi: 2005a).



Figure 8: "Asylum protest at the Brandenburg Gate: Debate on the reception of more refugees"

The articulated meanings further suggest that Germany considers itself as playing an important role in the European Union. This is supported by the following quote: “we are the richest and a political strong country in the European Union, our government needs to implement its claim for leadership” (Der Spiegel: 14/10/2013c). These assumptions seem to support the notion that Germany has regained its self-confidence on the international stage as for example Bach and Peters (2002) have argued. In effect, ‘Europe’ seems to play an important role for the German national vision.

This notion of a newly refurbished German self-confidence, however, is importantly undermined through a feeling of German ‘guilt’. Most of the articles which debate the relevance of the shipwreck for Germany blame the German government for being complicit in the deaths. An article for example asserts that “refugees are not welcome in Europe. Especially not in Germany” (Der Spiegel: 07/10/2013a). Similar to the European Union, the German government is presented as stubborn and unwilling to change its position by holding on to the Dublin Regulation. In this context, a need to unburden other member states is emphasized (Der Spiegel: 05/10/2013b). These findings indicate that the feeling of German ‘guilt’, which is said to have become installed after the Second World War, is far from gone. A German self-criticism thus seems to play an important role in debates on its position in the EU.

The Lampedusa shipwreck as ‘tragedy’:

Similar to the storyline articulated in *The Guardian*, the sinking of the migrant boat is described with a high degree of empathy. A total number of 15 articles make direct use of metaphors such as ‘disaster’, ‘tragedy’ or ‘drama’ in their headlines in order to describe the incident (see for example Der Spiegel: 03/10/2013a). Moreover, the illegal migrants are portrayed as innocent victims of political inadequacies and as being in need of help. One article, for example, asserts that “refugees are particularly vulnerable people” (Der Spiegel: 09/10/2013d). In effect, compassion and empathy for their destinies is evoked. Other article pictures reminisciental photographs of friends and families of the drowned migrants what sparks identification with their histories (see Figure 9 below) (Der Spiegel: 07/10/2013b).



Figure 9: “Dumb witnesses of an unbelievable tragedy”

Such photographs seem to deliberately undermine Amoores’s (2006) argument of the ‘objectification’ of subjects in effect of biopolitical ways of governing. The storyline in *Der Spiegel*, however, portrays the illegal migrants as subjects and their individual histories are told. As was already discussed in the context of the storyline in *The Guardian*, these meanings also seem to question postcolonial views on the European identity as well as the metanarrative of a ‘globalized fear’.

A softening of the European border as solution:

The conceptualizations of a postcolonial European identity and a ‘globalized fear’ appear to be further undermined. In contrast to the British *The Guardian*, notions of a ‘migration wave’ and exhausted reception capacities are explicitly subverted. Such arguments are designated as “macabre populism” and unsubstantial in the articles in *Der Spiegel*. Neighbouring countries, mostly developing countries themselves, would take in the majority of refugees whereas Europe does not show any solidarity towards people in need (Der Spiegel: 10/10/2013c). Blamed for the articulation of a ‘migration wave’ rhetoric are xenophobic and populist politicians in countries such as Britain and France (Der Spiegel: 09/10/2013e). Through these meanings, notions of dangers ‘out there’ that threaten the stability ‘in here’ (see Debrix: 2007) seem to be undermined by the storyline in *Der Spiegel*. This adds to the assumption that the metanarrative of a ‘globalized fear’ (Pain: 2009) is inadequate for the explanation of the articulated understandings of the European identity in *Der Spiegel*.

Moreover, the proposed solutions to the inadequacies in the European immigration and asylum policies centre on a softening of the European border. An article, for example, discusses the potential of issuing temporary work visa to economic migrants (Der Spiegel: 09/10/2013b). A handful of articles also argue for the opening of humanitarian corridors in the Mediterranean Sea through which refugees could reach Europe safely (see Der Spiegel: 09/10/2013d). This suggests that this storyline does not re-assert a strict dividing line between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and, in effect, a postcolonial identity (see van Houtum: 2010). Rather, the notion of ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ is deliberately blurred as the following quote illustrates: “Europe is an immigration continent” (Der Spiegel: 14/10/2013c). A “geopolitical violence” (Slater: 1997, 59) which aims to exclude the ‘other’ appears to be deliberately subverted in the storyline in *Der Spiegel*.

Furthermore, the introduction of the border surveillance system EUROSUR is particularly criticized in a handful of articles (see Der Spiegel: 10/10/2013d). It is argued that what is needed is not a new “surveillance apparatus” but instead a better coordination of rescue at sea (ibid.). As has been noted in the theoretical chapter, scholars have interpreted EUROSUR as a move towards the establishment of a “biopolitical border” which is based on scientific and biometric techniques of border management (see Hyndman: 2012). The establishment of such biopolitical techniques, however, seems to be highly criticized in the storyline on the Lampedusa shipwreck.

These findings suggest that the understandings of ‘Europe’ and its border in *Der Spiegel* can neither be explained by a postcolonial European identity nor by the metanarrative of a ‘globalized fear’. The analysis has further indicated that the German national identity is

importantly connected to ‘Europe’. In conclusion, the meanings differ importantly from the storyline articulated in the British newspaper *The Guardian*. This indicates that ‘Europe’ might indeed be understood as a “traveling idea” (Said: 1983) that gets modified as it traverses from one context to another.

	The Shipwreck in <i>Der Spiegel</i>
WHERE?	Lampedusa as “Europe’s southernmost outpost”; A matter of European <i>and</i> German importance
WHAT?	A “tragedy”, “catastrophe” and “drama”; A symbol for the failure of Europe
WHO?	The illegal immigrants as vulnerable and innocent victims; The EU as culprit which is “untrustworthy”, “cynical” and stubborn; Germany is guilty and responsible for the failure of Europe
WHY?	Failure of the EU to put in place a common and fair approach to asylum; The “fiction of Fortress Europe”
SO WHAT?	A question of the inner design and values of Europe; Urgent alternations in the European border and asylum policies are needed

Table 2: The Analysed Geopolitical Storyline in *Der Spiegel*

4.3 France’s Engagement with Africa: The Geopolitical Storyline in *Le Monde*

4.3.1 The ‘Worldly’ Context of Production

The analyses of geopolitical storylines in *The Guardian* and *Der Spiegel* have indicated that understandings of ‘Europe’ appear to be importantly connected to their ‘worldly’ context. This eschews the question of whether the peculiar context plays a similar role for the French understandings of ‘Europe’ and its borders. I would thus like to shortly sketch out this context in the following paragraphs.

A recurring topic in the national news section of *Le Monde* in the weeks preceding and following the Lampedusa shipwreck appears to be the current political climate in France. Concerns about the rising popularity of the far-right party ‘Front National’ are raised in several articles. ‘Front National’ (FN), headed by Marie Le Pen, holds a nationalistic and anti-immigrant stance and attracts ever higher numbers of voters (see *Le Monde*: 05/10/2013). This development is said to spark heightened fears across the French political elite (*Le Monde*:

14/09/2013a). It would lead to a “droitisation” (‘rightization’) of the centre-right party UMP which is in fear of losing voters to the FN. In effect, the UMP, which was led by the former president Nicolas Sarkozy, is blamed for being increasingly radical and aligned with the FN (Le Monde: 14/09/2013b).

The notion of a nationalistic and right-wing French government seems to resonate with academic works on the historical geopolitical reasoning in France. Such a tendency is traced back to the Algerian war of independence and the subsequent political and economic crisis in France in 1958 which led to the establishment of a new government headed by Charles de Gaulle. The subsequent political course of action, also known as ‘Gaullism’, was characterized by a nationalistic undertone, a right-wing ideology and a strong sense of leadership (van der Wusten and Dijkink: 2002, 33). Such a way of governing has returned under former president Nicolas Sarkozy, as Scuzzarello and Kinnvall (2013) argue. Sarkozy has moved themes like immigration and national identity on to the centre of political debates what found its expression in the prohibition of the burqa and niqab in 2010 and the short-term re-introduction of French border controls in 2011 (Mamadouh: 2012, 389).

The harsh course of action towards the Roma in the greater area of Paris is also frequently debated in the national news section (see Le Monde: 21/09/2013a). The French government, which argues that the Roma are unable to integrate into society, is repeatedly criticized for its racist behaviour such as the forced eviction of Roma camps (see Le Monde: 27/09/2013). This further suggests the presence of a critical attitude towards a xenophobic tendency in the French government in *Le Monde*.

The national news section of *Le Monde* is concerned with another issue in the French government. A dispute between the two ministers regularly hits the front pages. In this context, the blame is put on President Francois Hollande, leader of the Socialist party, who is said to be incapable of keeping the government together. An article on the conflict for example reports that “Manuel Valls profits from Francois Hollande’s weakness” (Le Monde: 04/10/2013). Moreover, it is asserted that Hollande holds a bad image in the country (Le Monde: 01/10/2013). The notion of Francois Hollande as a weak and incapable president is further strengthened by articles that report on the federal elections in Germany. In more than two articles the re-election of Angela Merkel is discussed as a disadvantage for France, since it means that the “weak” president Hollande is at the mercy of German interests (Le Monde: 25/09/2013).

This problematisation of a ‘weak’ government seems to parallel academic conceptions on the historical geopolitical discourse in France. Van der Wusten and Dijkink (2002, 23) assert that,

in the French thinking, the state is centralized, powerful and endowed with a certain mission, namely the implementation of ‘Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite’ (Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity). This vision of the state is seen as the heritage of the French revolution which marked the fusion of ‘state’ and ‘nation’.

The international news section of *Le Monde* appears to be especially important for the newspaper since it takes up a relative great part. It regularly features extra sections, such as ‘La Planete’, which debate pressing problems around the world. Moreover, the newspaper reports particularly often on developments in Northern as well as Sub-Saharan Africa. This includes articles on the political situation in the Central African Republic (Le Monde: 05/10/2013c), the civil war in Mali (Le Monde: 21/09/2013b), or the political relations between Algeria and Morocco (Le Monde: 03/10/2013). This indicates a peculiar importance of the African continent for the French world view as was also put forward by academic works. Levy (2000, 103) traces this notion of a special connection to Africa back to the French colonial era.

The preliminary considerations identified peculiar contextual factors that might be of importance for the storyline produced in *Le Monde*. The French government is perceived to be characterized by a right-wing and nationalistic orientation. Moreover, in the French thinking, the ‘state’ seems to be endowed with a certain mission and strength. The current government headed by president Hollande, however, is said to deviate from this model. Furthermore, the African continent seems to play an important role in the French world view.

4.3.2 The Geopolitical Storyline on the Lampedusa Shipwreck

The analysis of the storyline produced in *Le Monde* aimed at identifying understandings of Europe and its borders among the French public. It covered a total number of 41 articles that directly relate to the Lampedusa migrant boat. In the following paragraphs, I would like to present and interpret the analysed geopolitical storyline (see Table 3 below for a summary).

Immigration as a European matter:

Similar to the storyline in *Der Spiegel*, the migrant shipwreck is first and foremost framed as a European matter. The island of Lampedusa is presented as “outpost of Europe” (Le Monde: 05/10/2013). All articles debate the incident in connection with the policies of the European Union whereas the domestic political debate in Italy is neglected.

Thus, the shipwreck also leads to a critical engagement with the European immigration and asylum policies (see for example Le Monde: 04/10/2013b). This indicates that the French

public considers questions of immigration as a European matter instead as a national concern. The persistence of national sovereignties is, instead, directly critiqued: “the reflex of sovereignty here, as well as in other domains, has proved to fail” (Le Monde: 08/10/2013b). Two articles also criticize the “anyone-for-himself-mentality” (Le Monde: 05/10/2013d) of the European member states, which is said to “paralyze” the European Union. Similar to the storyline produced in *Der Spiegel*, the shipwreck thus sparks farer-reaching discussions on the design and identity of ‘Europe’. For instance, an article is entitled “The founding principles are at risk in Brussels” (Le Monde: 24/10/2013b). This indicates that a certain vision of the European identity does indeed exist among the French public what seems to demonstrate their identification with ‘Europe’.

A question of Europe’s engagement with global inequalities:

In contrast to *Der Spiegel*, however, the articles in *Le Monde* do not tend to debate the incident primarily as a question of the inner design of the European Union. Rather, the shipwreck becomes a matter of Europe’s position in the wider world. This is indicated by the fact that the Mediterranean Sea, understood as the intersection between the African and European continent, becomes the primary locus of attention (see Figure 10 below). The Mediterranean Sea is described as a “cemetery of migrants” (Le Monde: 04/10/2013c) or as “evil dragon that gorges immigration candidates” (Le Monde: 05/10/2013a).

A handful of articles also directly discuss the symbolic meaning of the Mediterranean Sea. Its importance is explained by the presence of important historical ties between Europe and Africa in effect of the colonial era (Le Monde: 04/10/2013b). Another author asserts that the Mediterranean has historically constituted a space of exchange and connection rather than a frontier. This is illustrated in the following quote: “Since the antiquity, the ‘sea in the middle’ has also brought the populations and cultures of the two coasts of the Mediterranean together. This is proved by the former boom of seaports, especially Marseille, where trade and commerce were centred” (Le Monde: 26/10/2013). Here, a direct link between the European border and the historical development of France is drawn. This hints at the French public’s identification with Europe and the entanglement of the French and European identity, as was suggested by Waever (2005).

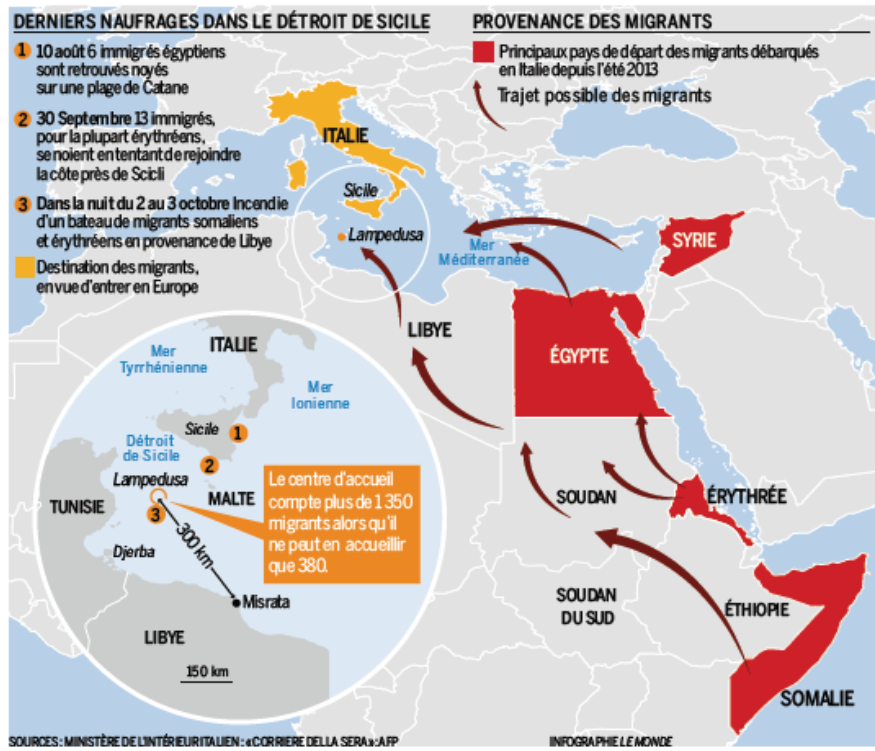


Figure 10: The Mediterranean Sea as the intersection of Africa and Europe

The special importance ascribed to the Mediterranean Sea indicates that the storyline in *Le Monde* frames the shipwreck as a question of how Europe engages with the African continent. This is for example illustrated by the following quote: “Lampedusa is an island rife with pain which carries the marks of the global indifference” (Le Monde: 06/10/2013). In this sense, the ‘problem’ is presented as the notion that Europe turns a blind eye on global inequalities. These meanings explicitly criticize the picture of Europe as a ‘Gated Community’ which was suggested by van Houtum and Pijpers (2007).

Similar to the storylines in *The Guardian* and *Der Spiegel*, the shipwreck is presented as a “human tragedy” (Le Monde: 04/10/2013b) or a “massacre of shame” (Le Monde: 04/10/2013b). This ‘tragedy’ is mostly attributed to the European border policies which are harshly criticized for establishing a dividing line between Europe as the ‘First World’ and Africa as the ‘Third world’. An article for example criticizes that the EU has constructed a “Mediterranean wall” what is interpreted as “the war of the new century” (Le Monde: 04/10/2013b).

These meanings suggest that the French public understandings of ‘Europe’ do not re-assert a postcolonial identity which tries to establish a clear demarcation line between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Such a “geopolitical violence” (Slater: 1997) is explicitly criticized in the storyline in *Le Monde*, as the preceding quote has demonstrated. Pictures attached to the articles also actively

break down the boundary between ‘us’ and ‘them’ by portraying immigrants together with the inhabitants of Lampedusa (see Figure 11).



Figure 11: Blurring the binary between 'us' and 'them'

A special responsibility for the African continent:

‘Europe’ is further represented as a “pole of prosperity” (Le Monde: 08/10/2013b) which attracts migrants from the underdeveloped world. The illegal migrants are therefore less portrayed as subjects with individual histories but rather as a symbol for the ‘Third world’ in general, as the caricature below aptly visualizes (see Figure 12). More than ten articles discuss the underdeveloped situation in Africa evoke a feeling of compassion for the ‘poor’. One article, for example, problematizes the horrific situation in Eritrea with the headline “Eritrea, a country half-prison, half-military casern” (Le Monde: 09/10/2013a). The country is said to lack democracy, a constitution, free press, and the protection of human rights.

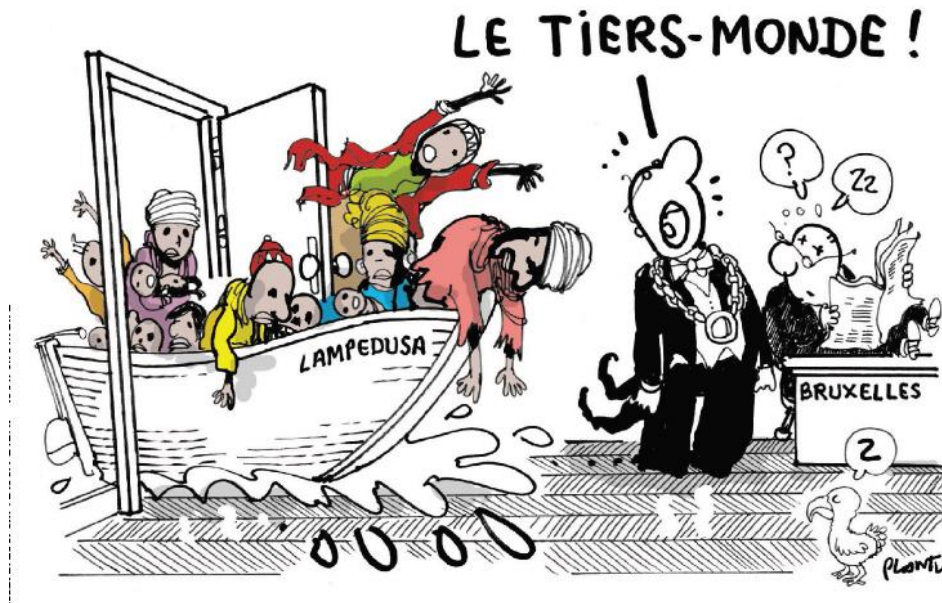


Figure 12: “The Third World!” (Le Tiers-Monde!)

Based on these presumptions, many articles assert a special responsibility for the situation on the African continent. Around a handful of articles argues that Europe should preoccupy itself more actively with the continent and that only an increase of development aid would help to tackle the root causes of the ‘problem’ (see *Le Monde*: 22/10/2013c). An article, for example, argues that “Europe has to show conscience. We should not forget where we come from. We have to host refugees who flee from totalitarianism and oppression. By ignoring them, Europe turns its back on these values” (*Le Monde*: 05/10/2013c). These understandings indicate that the French vision of ‘Europe’ is characterized by solidarity and responsibility for Africa. It should further actively advocate the dissemination of democratic values to the continent.

This visionary ‘Europe’ is connected to the assumptions of the contextual analysis in two ways. First, the African continent seems to play an important role for the French world view. This meaning of the national identity appears to be transferred to ‘Europe’: not only France but also the European Union are said to hold a special responsibility for the continent. Second, scholars such as Waeber (2005, 744) have argued that the French state is perceived as being responsible for the implementation of a certain mission, namely ‘Liberty, Equality and Fraternity’. This meaning also appears to be transferred to ‘Europe’ in the context of the shipwreck. The European Union is said to be responsible for the implementation of democratic values in Africa. These findings resonate with the conceptions of Moisi et al. (2013, 744) who understand ‘Europe’ as a “differentially articulated concept, vision and project within self-defining

national narratives”. In this sense, French national narratives seem to hold an important influence on the articulated vision of ‘Europe’.

The notion that Europe is responsible for the implementation of democracy and human rights on the African continent parallels Slater’s (2011, 6) conceptualizations of ‘Euro-Americanism’. He argues that this discourse asserts the superiority of the Western culture and goes hand in hand with negative essentializations of the ‘other’. The articulated meanings in *Le Monde* also seem to support a vision of a ‘Europe’ that functions as the “motor of progress, civilization, modernity and development” (ibid. 11) on the ‘deteriorated’ African continent. This indicates that a postcolonial European identity might in part be able to explain the meanings articulated in *Le Monde*.

The European governments as ‘paralysed’, xenophobic and inactive:

The ‘tragedy’ is mostly attributed to the European governments and their lack of solidarity for the African continent. The deaths are presented as a “symbol for the failure of the existing system” (Le Monde: 14/10/2013). Three articles argue that Lampedusa is held “hostage of politics” (see Le Monde: 17/10/2013a). In this context, it is asserted that the European political elite is paralysed by “paranoia” and, in effect, distributes xenophobic attitudes (Le Monde: 04/10/2013a). One article also suggests that the ‘state’ practices a “propaganda” against the foreigner in general by inventing the image of an abstract and dangerous stranger. These articulated meanings indicate that the government is said to be possessed by a ‘globalized fear’ (Pain: 2009) which is, however, highly criticized. The conceptualization of a European identity that is determined by an abstract fear of terrorism thus not seems to be in line with public understandings of Europe in France.

This assumption is supported by the fact that the image of a ‘migration wave’ is deliberately undermined in the articles, as the following quote indicates: “This is not Africa [...] but the impression is given that the south of the Mediterranean is a gigantic reservoir of a continent that dreams of coming to Europe” (Le Monde: 17/10/2013a). Blamed for the dissemination of such images are the ‘paranoid’ and xenophobic European governments. The French government is also perceived to be directly complicit in the distribution of such images (Le Monde: 04/10/2013b).

These meanings appear to parallel with the assumptions of the contextual analysis. It was indicated that the French public is increasingly concerned about the ‘droitisation’ of the government and the increasing power of the Front National. This appears to influence the perception of the European government which is also said to be increasingly xenophobic.

In addition, the articles in *Le Monde* repeatedly criticize the European Union for its inactiveness in proposing changes to the failed European border and asylum policies. Authors often argue that the European Union is “paralysed” by the unwillingness of its member states to work together (Le Monde: 05/10/2013d). The inactivity of the EU in the aftermath of the boat sinking is regarded with great dismay in most of the articles published in the second half of October (see for example Le Monde: 25/10/2013). One author thus asserts that “I was searching Europe, in Mali, in Syria, at the Roman camps, but I could not find it anywhere. In Brussels, I could not find anything else than mere accountants” (Le Monde: 11/10/2013b). In consequence, articles repeatedly call for urgent action and changes in the European immigration policies (see Le Monde: 04/10/2013b).

This critique of the inactiveness of the EU appears to resonate with the French vision of the state which was outlined in the contextual analysis. As Waever (2005) has argued, in the French thinking, the ‘state’ is strong, centralized and endowed with a certain mission. The articulated meanings, however, indicate that the EU is seen as deviating from this vision. The European government is presented as inactive, fragmented and hostage of a xenophobic ‘paranoia’. In effect, it is presented as being unable to fulfil the presumed role of the ‘state’.

The analysed storyline in *Le Monde* suggests that the French understanding of ‘Europe’ centres on its relation with the outside world. In this sense, the shipwreck is interpreted as a question of how Europe engages with global inequalities. A special responsibility for the African continent is evoked what appears to parallel conceptions on a postcolonial identity. Moreover, the analysis has revealed that the national identity as well as contextual factors seem to play an important role for the articulated understandings of Europe in the articles in *Le Monde*. This, again, supports the notion of ‘Europe’ as a ‘traveling idea’.

	The Shipwreck in <i>Le Monde</i>
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WHERE?	The Mediterranean Sea as the intersection of the ‘First World’ and the ‘Third World’; A matter of European importance
WHAT?	A “tragedy”, “drama” and “massacre of shame”; A symbol for the “global indifference” and the “failure of the existing system”; Lampedusa is held “hostage of politics”
WHO?	The illegal immigrants as innocent victims <i>and</i> as symbol for the ‘Third World’; The European governments as culprits which are “paralyzed” and “xenophobic”;
WHY?	Europe shuts its eyes off of global inequalities; A deteriorated situation of human rights and democracy in Africa; Inactive and xenophobic European governments which are unable to put in place a fair approach to asylum
SO WHAT?	A question of Europe’s engagement with global inequalities; Urgent alternations in the European border and asylum policies <i>and</i> an active engagement with Africa are needed

Table 3: The Analysed Geopolitical Storyline in *Le Monde*

4.4 Synthesis: Europe as a ‘Traveling Idea’

The analyses of newspaper articles have illustrated that the media debate on the Lampedusa shipwreck raises important discussions on Europe’s border and identity. This suggests that borders and identities are indeed two sides of the same coin (Paasi: 2001). However, the three preceding analyses have also demonstrated that a distinctive storyline on the Lampedusa shipwreck is produced in each of the assessed newspapers (see Table 4 below). This indicates that not only different meanings are ascribed to the migrant boat but also that the understandings of ‘Europe’ vary between the British, German and French public.

What follows from these findings is that theoretical conceptualizations of the European border and its link to the European identity are insufficient in two ways. First, they regard ‘Europe’ as a homogenous entity and thereby essentialize its meanings. In consequence, they themselves fall into the ‘territorial trap’ (Agnew: 1994) and reproduce a modernist logic of ordering space (see Brenner et al.: 2003). The analysis has illustrated that Europe is made up of inner

differences, not only between its member states but also between the European government and the public.

Second, the outlined theoretical conceptions paint an entirely pessimistic picture of the European identity by asserting that Europe reproduces a colonial identity based on a feeling of superiority (see van Houtum: 2010; Balibar: 1998; Slater: 2004; Robins and Morely: 1993; Heisler: 2001) or that it is possessed by a ‘globalized fear’ and subsequently produces biopolitical modes of governance (see Pain: 2009; Debrix: 2007; Huysmans: 2006; Hyndman: 2011; Agamben: 1998; Minca: 2005; Paasi: 2005b). Both of these views, however, are overly critical and deterministic and, in effect, fail to expose possible starting points for future changes or discursive dislocations. The empirical analysis above, however, has revealed that the citizens of Europe themselves appear to be highly critical of a notion of ‘Fortress Europe’ and, in effect, constantly undermine postcolonial understandings of Europe as well as a ‘globalized fear’. By doing so, they propose alternative visions of the design and working of ‘Europe’. These views, however, have remained overlooked by work on Europe’s external borders.

The assessed meanings of the Lampedusa shipwreck thus suggest that the understandings of ‘Europe’ vary between the national publics in France, Germany and Britain. This supports the view that ‘Europe’ “figures as a differentially articulated concept, vision and project within self-defining national narratives.” (Moisio et al.: 2013, 744). Each of the analysed storylines has suggested that national identities propose the framework for different ‘readings’ of the European identity (Paasi: 2005a; Waever: 2005): be it a relative anti-European and sovereign British identity, a feeling of German responsibility for European problems, or a French narrative of a united and strong European state that is endowed with the mission of ‘Liberty, Equality and Fraternity’. Yet, in all of these cases, Europe forms part of the national vision just as the nation forms part of the understanding of Europe. In effect, different ‘Europes’ come into being.

The analyses above have further suggested that these different readings of Europe are dependent on the ‘worldly’ context of their production. Not only historical developments, such as the two world wars in the German context, do influence the understandings of Europe but also contemporary political and social concerns, such as the advance of right-wing politics in the French context. In effect, ‘Europe’ can be understood as a “traveling idea” (Said: 1983) which changes as it travels from one location or point in time to another. As the idea of ‘Europe’ travels and transverses different contexts, it adapts to the new circumstances and becomes modified. We thus need to think of ‘interpretive communities’ (Fish: 1976) which respond

similar to the idea of 'Europe', such as the readers and journalists of *The Guardian*, *Der Spiegel* or *Le Monde*.

What shapes do these different ideas of 'Europe' thus take on? The above analysis of articles in *The Guardian* has suggested that the *British 'Europe'* is conceptualized as an entity which is not of great importance for the British state. European problems do not directly affect the British public. Although the current status quo of the European Union is criticized, no certain vision or ideal of 'Europe' is evoked. Rather, 'Europe' seems to be understood as a political entity that is merely only mobilised and abducted by its different member states for their own ends. Moreover, the British 'Europe' is invaded by a 'migration wave', with hordes of migrants still waiting at Europe's doors to get in.

The *German 'Europe'*, in contrast, is highly connected to the German nation-state. Not only do European problems become German problems but also vice versa. Germany is thus responsible for 'Europe' and guilty for its failures. Moreover, 'Europe' is portrayed as an immigration continent. The visionary German 'Europe' is characterized by its inner unity and the solidarity among its member states. Moreover, it is receptive to people in need of help and implements its founding values, namely human rights, freedom and democracy. The European Union, however, is not in line with this vision.

The *French 'Europe'* respectively is said to be held hostage of xenophobic attitudes as well as its inner disunity. In effect, it is perceived to be characterized by a paralyzed and inactive political elite. The current status quo of the EU is also criticized and perceived to deviate from the visionary French 'Europe'. This vision is characterized by an engagement with the African continent and global inequalities, the active distribution of democracy and humanistic values beyond its borders as well as a unified and strong state that fulfils its mission of 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity'.

I have noted that the purpose of this study was to identify the meanings of Europe which are offered by the media. Since I do, however, believe that discourses should be understood as language *and* practice (see Mueller: 2008), it is crucial to investigate how these different 'Europes' become enacted and played out through concrete practices. This provides an interesting avenue for future research on the European identity.

	The Guardian	Der Spiegel	Le Monde
WHERE?	Lampedusa as a ‘weak point’ in the European border; A matter of Italian importance	Lampedusa as “Europe’s southernmost outpost”; A matter of European <i>and</i> German importance	The Mediterranean Sea as the intersection of the ‘First World’ and the ‘Third World’; A matter of European importance
WHAT?	A “tragedy, “disaster” and “shame”; Part of a “boat people crisis”	A “tragedy”, “catastrophe” and “drama”; A symbol for the failure of Europe	A “tragedy”, “drama” and “massacre of shame”; A symbol for the “global indifference” and the “failure of the existing system”; Lampedusa is held “hostage of politics”
WHO?	The illegal migrants as innocent victims; The Italian state as culprit which is unable to put in place a fair approach to asylum; The EU becomes mobilised for Italy’s own ends / The EU is complicit in the deaths (ambivalent)	The illegal immigrants as vulnerable and innocent victims; The EU as culprit which is “untrustworthy”, “cynical” and stubborn; Germany is guilty and responsible for the failure of Europe	The illegal immigrants as innocent victims <i>and</i> as symbol for the ‘Third World’; The European governments as culprits which are “paralyzed” and “xenophobic”
WHY?	Failure of the Italian government to secure its borders; The EU refuses help to the Italian state (ambivalent)	Failure of the EU to put in place a common and fair approach to asylum; The “fiction of Fortress Europe”	Europe shuts its eyes off of global inequalities; A deteriorated situation of human rights and democracy in Africa; Inactive and xenophobic European governments that are unable to put in place a fair approach to asylum
SO WHAT?	Part of a ‘migration wave’; An ‘emergency situation’ that demands urgent action	A question of the inner design and values of Europe; Urgent alternations in the European border and asylum policies are needed	A question of Europe’s engagement with global inequalities; Urgent alternations in the European border and asylum policies and an active engagement with Africa are needed

Table 4: The Analysed Storylines in Comparison

5. Conclusion

Eventually, I want to come back to Francis Fukuyama's (2012) warning that "the EU is undergoing a life-threatening crisis [...] over the identity of the EU, and beyond that, of the identity of Europe" which was outlined in the introductory remarks. The findings of this study have revealed that the European Union indeed seems to be stuck in an identity crisis. The different national publics in France, Germany and Britain agree on the faulty design of the European Union and all voice a fundamental critique of the European government. This suggests that the public is indeed increasingly sceptical about the European Union, what the results of the European parliamentary elections have indicated recently.

The 'common thread' that binds the European publics together thus appears to be a critique of the EU and the call for urgent alternations. In effect, all three analysed storylines have demoralized the notion of a 'Fortress Europe'. They undermine the establishment of a strict dividing line between 'us' and 'them' – and thus a modernist logic of ordering space – by pointing up the blurred notion of 'inside' and 'outside'. Neither do they construct an inferior 'other' nor do they assert a 'globalized fear' and an abstract notion of terrorism, as academic works have suggested. Instead, the public in France, Germany and Britain seems to perceive of the refugees as subjects who 'could have been our sons', as an author has aptly noted. Their individual stories are told and compassion for their destinies is evoked. Could this present a first move beyond the logic of the nation-state with its supposed strict borders and a homogenous culture?

Fukuyama's arguments, however, have not proved to be entirely correct: the identity crisis of the EU does not seem to be part of a farer-reaching identity crisis of 'Europe' itself. The preceding study has indicated that a vision and ideal of 'Europe' is present among the public in France and Germany. Although this might not apply for Britain, where 'Europe' indeed seems to undergo an identity crisis since no visions over the aims and benefits of 'Europe' are evoked. In the French and German public, however, the 'identity crisis' seems to take the shape of a growing abyss between the policies of the European Union and the ideal of 'Europe'.

The analysis of the media debate in *Der Spiegel* has indicated that the German vision of 'Europe', on the one hand, is characterized by a focus on Europe's inner design and values. In this 'Europe', member states act in unison and show a mutual solidarity that transcends economic interests. It implements its founding values, namely the protection of human rights,

democracy and freedom, shows receptiveness for people in need of help, and does not circumscribe the right to asylum. This 'Europe' is an immigration continent.

The French vision of 'Europe', on the other hand, focuses on Europe's position in the wider world. It is characterized by a responsibility for the global south and does not attempt to shut itself off from global inequalities. Instead, it engages itself actively with the problems of the African continent and shows solidarity for refugees. The French 'Europe' is also characterized by a unified and strong government that implements its mission of liberty, equality and fraternity within and beyond its borders.

These visions have revealed that the public proposes concrete solutions to the 'identity crisis' of the European Union. A way out of the assumed crisis might thus be within direct reach. In order to bridge the gap between the European policies and the visionary 'Europes', the European government should therefore be more attentive to its putative citizens.

The different visions of 'Europe', however, should not be regarded as an either-or question. Although their meanings vary from each other, they are not mutually exclusive. I have indicated that the French 'Europe' focuses on its position in the world whereas the German 'Europe' is concerned with its inner design and working. Thus, these 'Europes' do not seem to present conflictive ideas. Rather, both aim for the same end, namely the universal implementation of human rights, solidarity and democracy.

Why do we then not start to imagine these different ideas of 'Europe' as complementary parts of the big picture? Thinking about the European identity as made up of different but complementary parts with a collective aim might, after all, propose a solution to the root cause of the 'crisis': it might finally allow us to overcome the logic of "national sovereignty, with its implication of prestige politics and economic protection" – what Jean Monnet has already aimed for a long time ago.

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LE MONDE (21/09/2013b): *Au Mali, François Hollande tire les leçons de l'intervention militaire française.* Print version, P. 3.

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Coded Meanings in *The Guardian*

- **WHERE? Location specification**

The articles in *The Guardian* locate the incident at “Italy’s southern shores, a key entry point to the European Union” (The Guardian: 03/10/2013b). The island of Lampedusa is seen as “a promised land for thousands of Africans fleeing war and poverty who aspire to new lives, usually in northern Europe” (The Guardian: 06/10/2013b). These meanings locate the incident at the Italian and European border simultaneously. On the one hand, the shipwreck is connected to the inner security of Europe. On the other hand, the island is seen as a ‘weak point’ in the European border. As the above quotes illustrate, Lampedusa is perceived to be permeable to illegal migrants whose actual aim is to reach northern European states.

The articles therefore describe the migrant shipwreck first and foremost as an Italian issue and debate its implication for the national politics. This is indicated by the fact that most of the articles report on the political debate in Italy in the aftermath of the event. One article notes that the “ramifications of the disaster dominated political debate in Italy” (The Guardian: 10/10/2013a). The responses of Italian politicians are cited and the legal situation in Italy, such as the law that makes immigration a crime punishable with a fine, is debated. The shipwreck is not seen as a direct concern for Britain. The consequences for the British politics or a feeling of ‘guilt’ are not debated. Only one author directly relates the incident to Britain in a short paragraph. He argues: “If the Lampedusa boat had landed safely, the next wave of stories would have warned of the hordes now heading across Europe; destination Britain” (The Guardian: 04/10/2013c). The author thereby asserts that the migrant boat would only have been of importance for the British government if it had landed safely. In effect, the migrant boat appears to be capsized at a rather great distance, without directly affecting Britain.

- **WHAT? Situation description**

From the very beginning, the sinking of the migrant boat is seen as a dramatic and horrific event. This is demonstrated by the frequent use of metaphors such as ‘disaster’, ‘tragedy’ or ‘shame’. Five articles directly feature the metaphor of a “tragedy” in their headlines (see

for example *The Guardian*: 08/10/2013b). The event, with more than 300 deaths, gains particular meaning as the most devastating to occur in history. Moreover, the ship is categorized as being part of a greater ‘migration wave’ of thousands of Africans trying to reach Europe. It is argued that Italy would be “facing a continual problem” (*The Guardian*: 04/10/2013c). One author speaks of a “boat people crisis” (*The Guardian*: 13/10/2013b). Many articles emphasize the urgency of the perceived crisis by resorting to statistical figures and numbers (see *The Guardian*: 03/10/2013c)

Several articles also talk about a “shame” (see *The Guardian*: 08/10/2013b). Authors argue that the deaths could have been prevented if a better European border management were in place. It is therefore emphasized that the “boat sinking was no accident” (*The Guardian*: 04/10/2013b) but rather a “slaughter of innocents”, as one article suggests in its headline (*The Guardian*: 03/10/2013a). In consequence, the shipwreck becomes a sign which “shows that the current migration and asylum policies do not work at all” (*The Guardian*: 04/10/2013b).

▪ **WHO? Actor Typifications**

The illegal migrants who lost their lives at Lampedusa take up a rather passive role in the storyline in *The Guardian*. They are seen as being innocent victims of political inadequacies and are presented as in need of help. The destiny of the migrants is regarded with compassion and pity. They would have had to face a “hellish journey” in order to flee war and poverty in Africa. One article, for example, describes the perilous journey which an illegal migrant called Villa and his friend had to go through in order to reach Europe. Other articles feature eye witnesses’ reports of people who tried to rescue the migrants or of divers who tell about their horrific experiences of recovering dead bodies in the sea. Such reports evoke a feeling of compassion and identification with the dead migrants. This is best illustrated by the quote of a diver who laments a dead child with the words “It could have been my son” (*The Guardian*: 07/10/2013).

An active role in the tragedy is ascribed to the Italian government whose policies towards illegal migrants are said to be particularly harsh. In particular, the former Berlusconi administration is blamed for its agreements with the Libyan government under Gaddafi, its push-backs of refugees in need of protection, as well as for the law which turns migrants into criminals (*The Guardian*: 04/10/2013b). Italy is therefore perceived to be ‘guilty’. This is also reflected by a quote of the Italian Prime Minister Letta who apologizes for the inadequacies of his country (*The Guardian*: 09/10/2013). Moreover, Italy is seen as being

unable to get a hold of the ‘problem’ by itself. It is said to lack help and solidarity from European member states which are, in turn, also presumed to be complicit in the deaths. Many articles therefore emphasize that “this is not an Italian tragedy, this is a European tragedy” (The Guardian: 04/10/2013c). The calls for help from Southern European states, however, are seen to remain unanswered. This, in turn, leads to a situation where “Italian opposition is growing to EU rules on refugees” (The Guardian: 09/10/2013).

- **WHY? Attributions and Imputations of Causality**

The illegal crossings of the Mediterranean Sea are understood as direct outcome of the poverty in African countries. It is argued that “migrants, driven by poverty, see their intended destination countries as being wealthy” (The Guardian: 08/10/2013b). Civil war and brutal regimes are evoked as another motive and the horrific situation in countries such as Eritrea is described (The Guardian: 09/10/2013). The illegal migrants, however, are not blamed for their wish to travel to Europe. Rather, their situation is perceived as ‘desperate’ with no other choice. This notion is furthered by the fact that people smugglers are not blamed for the deaths. It is explicitly asserted that people smuggling is a symptom and not the cause of illegal migration (see The Guardian: 08/10/2013b).

Blamed for the deaths are instead the Italian and European governments which failed to rescue the migrants from drowning. The harsh Italian immigration policies are seen to encourage “trafficking by criminal organisations, while discouraging open water rescue for fishermen, who fear being accused of aiding and abetting” (The Guardian: 04/10/2013b). The European Union is further blamed for the dead migrants, although to a lesser extent. It is argued that the European member states do not show solidarity for the situation of the Italian state. This is particularly attributed to the fact that “national governments jealously guard their sovereign authority over immigration issues and are unlikely to surrender powers to Brussels or to pool decision-taking in the foreseeable future, despite the shame of the Lampedusa tragedy” (The Guardian: 08/10/2013a). Nevertheless, the guilt of the European Union in the deaths is regarded from an ambivalent stance. One author, for example, argues that “the EU’s attitude to migrants will be its own undoing” and that “the EU itself has become barbaric” (The Guardian: 10/10/2013b). Other articles, however, repeatedly devalue the call of the Italian government for help from the European Union. As such, Italy’s claim for a fairer share of migrants is seen as unjustified since the country takes in only a small percentage of asylum seekers in comparison to northern European states (The Guardian: 09/10/2013). This sparks the notion that the Italian government tries

to take advantage of the situation for its own ends. Moreover, Italian officials are blamed for actively encouraging illegal migrants to move onwards to northern European states what furthers the notion of Italian guilt.

- **SO WHAT? Strategic Significance**

The sinking of the migrant boat at Lampedusa is rated as being part of a greater “boat people crisis” (The Guardian: 13/10/2013b). The word ‘crisis’ is evoked particularly often what disseminates the notion of a pressing ‘problem’ for Europe and an emergency situation. This became especially explicit after another migrant boat capsized on the 11th October and more than 27 migrants die. The renewed incident is seen as a stark confirmation for the fact that “boats continue to arrive in a wave that has not relented” (The Guardian: 25/10/2013). The notion of hordes of migrants waiting at the European border to get in is aptly reflected in an article that reports on the situation in Libya. It is argued that “there are so many African migrants in Libya wanting to make the dangerous trip to Europe that Tripoli zoo has been turned into a processing centre for them” (The Guardian: 13/10/2012a).

Furthermore, articles repeatedly assert that “this is the time for action” (The Guardian: 11/10/2013) what again demonstrates the urgency of the topic. Concrete solutions, however, are not discussed in more detail in the context of the media debate. The few references made, however, might indicate an ambivalent position. On the one hand, it is argued that the militarization of borders is wrong and that a more humanitarian approach towards asylum is needed. This is, for example, indicated by the following quote: “Europe cannot go on sealing its borders and pretending not to see what’s going on in the south, especially in still-troubled Northern Africa, and in a continent with growing poverty, along with a food and health crisis” (The Guardian: 04/10/2013b). On the other hand, this view is questioned. Another article quotes an Italian politician who argues that a more relaxed migrant policy “would be an invitation to migrants from Africa and the Middle East to set sail for Italy. [...] How many illegals are we able to receive if one Italian in eight does not have enough money to eat?” (The Guardian: 10/10/2013a).

Coded Meanings in *Der Spiegel*

- **WHERE? Location Specification**

From the very beginning, the shipwreck is represented as a European ‘problem’. Articles in *Der Spiegel* regard the island of Lampedusa as the “gate to Europe” (Der Spiegel: 03/10/2013a) and “Europe’s southernmost outpost” (Der Spiegel: 03/10/2013c). The incident is thus not primarily located at the Italian but at the European border. It is asserted that “Entire Europe is shocked about what happened” (ibid.). The debate on political consequences focuses on the European immigration policies rather than the Italian domestic situation.

Moreover, the shipwreck is perceived to be of major importance for Germany. Articles regularly discuss the role of Germany and report on the political debate which was sparked in the country. The importance of the issue for the German state is also reflected in the fact that the asylum policies became a major issue for the coalition talks in early October in the aftermath of the German federal elections (see Der Spiegel: 10/10/2013a). From the 15th October on, the shipwreck also triggers large protests in Hamburg and Berlin. The public, together with striking refugees, calls for immediate changes in the German and European immigration policies. An article reports on the protests in Berlin as follows: “the drama of Lampedusa has consequences for Germany: via the Italian island, refugees move to Berlin and Hamburg” (Der Spiegel: 16/10/2013). Germany and Europe are even mentioned indistinctively. One article, for example, argues that “we are an immigration country and an immigration continent” (Der Spiegel: 14/10/2013c). This sentence clearly reflects identification with ‘Europe’ and evokes parallels between the German national identity and the European identity.

▪ **WHAT? Situation Descriptions**

The sinking of the migrant boat is described by the use of numerous metaphors and images that express emotional compassion for the deaths. The deaths are seen as a “drama in the Mediterranean Sea” (Der Spiegel: 03/10/2013a), a “disaster” (Der Spiegel: 04/10/2013b), a “tragedy” (Der Spiegel: 05/10/2013) or a “catastrophe” (Der Spiegel: 07/10/2013d). A total number of 15 articles make direct use of such metaphors in their headline. The emotional attachment to the ‘tragedy’ is further intensified by the assertion that Europe is mourning and shocked about what has happened.

The event is categorized as a proof for the flaws of the European Union. One author argues that “the island is a symbol. A symbol for the failure of the entire European migration policies” (Der Spiegel: 03/10/2013c). The shipwreck is particularized as a turning point for the European immigration policies since the event is said to demonstrate the urgent need

of alternations in the design of the European Union and its attitude towards immigrants. One author argues that “these people should not have died in vain. Their destiny should become a ‘Fukushima of asylum policies’ by marking a turning point” (Der Spiegel: 08/10/2013a). The incident is also framed as putting pressure on the German state when it comes to its attitude towards asylum seekers and its role in the European Union (see for example Der Spiegel: 04/10/2013c). The event is thus represented as being of major importance for Germany.

- **WHO? Actor Typifications**

Similar to the storyline produced in ‘The Guardian’, the illegal migrants who died in the Mediterranean Sea are presented as passive victims of political inadequacies. Compassion with their tragic destiny is expressed. For instance, this is demonstrated by an article that features reminiscient photographs of the family members of the drowned migrants. The article aims to “give a history to the dead” (Der Spiegel: 07/10/2013b) what evokes a feeling of identification with them. Moreover, the illegal migrants are presented as being in need of help. This is indicated by the following quote of the German president: “refugees are particularly vulnerable persons”.

The European Union is blamed for the deaths and, in effect, becomes the ‘culprit’ of the tragedy. The EU is perceived as being stubborn and not reacting appropriately to the tragedy (see Der Spiegel: 08/10/2013d). The incident would have demonstrated that the political elite is unwilling to move an inch from its position. Several articles also emphasize the cynicism of the European behaviour since the EU pretends to protect human rights and democracy while it is in fact only acting for economic interests. This is aptly reflected by an article which argues that the European immigration policies are inconsistent. They would allow rich foreigners who buy property in Europe to obtain an unconditional visa while people who flee war and poverty have no chance to enter Europe legally. In effect, “Europe is becoming untrustworthy” (Der Spiegel: 07/10/2013c).

Together with the European Union, Germany is seen as culprit for the deaths at Lampedusa. It is argued that “Refugees are not welcome in Europe. Especially not in Germany” (Der Spiegel: 07/10/2013a) Similar to the European Union, the German government is presented as stubborn and unwilling to change its position towards migrants. More than a handful of articles argue that Germany would hold on to the Dublin regulation, which identifies the country that is responsible for processing asylum claims as the one through which a person first entered the European Union. This law, however, is harshly criticized. A need for

Germany to take in more asylum seekers and to unburden other member states is therefore emphasized (Der Spiegel: 05/10/2013b). This line of argument is furthered by an assumed leading role of Germany in the European Union. This self-understanding is illustrated by the following quote: “We are the richest and a political strong country in the European Union, our government needs to realize its claim for leadership” (Der Spiegel: 14/10/2013c).

In contrast to Germany and the EU, Italy is presented as passive and powerless. It is not blamed for its inability to control the European border effectively. Instead, the Italian state is seen as a victim of the lack of solidarity from other European member states. This is for example demonstrated by a quote of the European parliamentary president who argues: “It’s a shame, that the EU has left Italy alone with the refugee flow from Africa for way to long” (Der Spiegel: 07/10/2013d).

- **WHY? Attributions and Imputations of Causality**

The deaths of hundreds of illegal migrants at Lampedusa are directly attributed to the failure of the European immigration and border policies. It is argued that the joint European asylum policy which was enacted in 1999 has never worked properly since the member states have been unwilling to show solidarity for each other. Central European countries, including Germany, would not offer assistance to the most affected countries such as Italy and Greece. In this context, the Dublin Regulation is highly criticized since it is seen as an excuse for Central European countries to refuse help. (see Der Spiegel: 09/10/2013b).

Moreover, the incident is attributed to the “fiction of Fortress Europe” (Der Spiegel: 03/10/2013c). Almost all articles except a few assert that the right for asylum has been undermined by push-back operations which deny entry to persons in need (ibid.). The receptiveness of the European Union towards refugees is thus interpreted as being the central problem (Der Spiegel: 08/10/2013a). Several articles also criticize the notion of a ‘refugee wave’ and exhausted reception capacities in Europe. Blamed for this rhetoric are foremost xenophobic and populist politicians in countries such as Britain and France (Der Spiegel: 09/10/2013e). However, these attitudes are said to be unsubstantial since neighbouring countries, mostly located in the global South, tend to host the majority of refugees.

Around ten articles also criticize the fact that Europe is not providing any legal means of entry to people in need. Refugees would therefore have no other choice than to resort to risky journeys across the Mediterranean Sea. Their behaviour is defended since it is argued

that they cannot be blamed for fleeing from chaos and violence in their home countries (see *Der Spiegel*: 09/10/2013b).

In response to the shipwreck, the European Union decided to increase the surveillance of the European border by the implementation of EUROSUR. This reasoning, however, is sharply criticized in a handful of articles. An article, for example, asserts that what is needed is not a better securitization of the border but instead a better coordination of rescue at sea (*Der Spiegel*: 10/10/2013d).

- **SO WHAT? Strategic Calculation**

In the storyline in *Der Spiegel* the Lampedusa shipwreck thus raises farer-reaching questions on the design and values of the European Union. The ‘tragedy’ of Lampedusa becomes a symbol for the “failure of Europe” (*Der Spiegel*: 03/10/2013c) in regard to the realization of its principal aims and values. This is reflected in the following quote: “to look the other way and to let people sail into their death disregards our European values” (*Der Spiegel*: 04/10/2013b). The question of how to treat illegal migrants, in effect, is discursively linked to the question of the European identity. One author, for example, argues that “It is a humanitarian obligation of the richest continent in the world, to host these people” (*Der Spiegel*: 14/10/2013c). He further asserts that “respecting human dignity, which is the fundamental mission of the EU, would demand us to not talk about numbers but to help these people” (*ibid.*). The protection of human rights is therefore seen as the principle aim of ‘Europe’. An aim that is, however, not implemented by the European Union.

Moreover, a lack of solidarity is seen to be a key problem of the EU. As the following quote illustrates aptly: “Outside of the conference room, it becomes clear what the actual construction failure of the community of states is – no matter if it is about the Euro or about human beings, the big picture splits up into the fussy national too quickly” (*Der Spiegel*: 08/10/2013d). In this regard, around ten articles assert the need for more solidarity among the European member states.

The shipwreck also raises questions on the role of Germany in the European Union. Many articles perceive of Germany as being responsible for the failed immigration policies since it is said to hold a leading role in the EU. This notion is reflected in the following quote: “Germany likes to argue with fairness when it comes to money, as was the case in the context of the Euro rescue. Europe would be a space of rights in which a fair burden share

should be in place, it is said. These principles, however, should especially apply when it comes to human beings” (Der Spiegel: 04/10/2013c).

Coded Meanings in *Le Monde*

▪ **WHERE? Location Specification**

The articles in the French newspaper *Le Monde* present the island of Lampedusa as an “outpost of Europe” (Le Monde: 05/10/2013). The island itself, however, seems to be less important than its actual location in the Mediterranean Sea. The Sea is understood as the frontier between Africa and Europe and is for example described as a “cemetery of migrants” (Le Monde: 04/10/2013c) or “as evil dragon that gorges immigration candidates” (Le Monde: 05/10/2013a). The special importance that is ascribed to the Mediterranean Sea is further illustrated by an article that discusses the historical function of the Mediterranean Sea. It is said to have functioned historically as a space of exchange and connection rather than as a frontier. This is indicated by the following quote: “Since the antiquity, the ‘sea in the middle’ has also brought the populations and cultures of the two coasts of the Mediterranean together. This is proved by the former boom of seaports, especially Marseille, where trade and commerce was centred” (Le Monde: 26/10/2013). The importance attributed to the Mediterranean Sea is further explained by the notion that Europe has historical ties to the Mediterranean and Africa in effect of the colonial era (see Le Monde: 04/10/2013b). The primary locus of the shipwreck thus seems to be the intersection of Europe and Africa what raises questions on the relationship between the two continents.

▪ **WHAT? Situation Descriptions**

Similar to the meanings articulated in ‘The Guardian’ and *Der Spiegel*, *Le Monde* describes the shipwreck as a “human tragedy” (Le Monde: 04/10/2013b), an “immense drama” (Le Monde: 05/10/2013a) or a “massacre of shame” (Le Monde: 04/10/2013c). The event is further particularized as “the deadliest drama of the history of the island” (Le Monde: 08/10/2013a).

These metaphors evoke an emotional attachment to the incident what is illustrated by the following quote: “Lampedusa is an island rife with pain that carries the marks of the global indifference” (Le Monde: 06/10/2013). In this sense, the incident is categorized as a proof

for the growing gorge between the ‘First’ and the ‘Third World’. The Sea is interpreted as “the Mediterranean wall” (Le Monde: 04/10/2013b) which tries to establish a segregation between Europe and Africa. The construction of such a wall around Europe is framed as the “the war of the new century” (ibid.).

Furthermore, the deaths are categorized as a “symbol for the failure of the existing system” (Le Monde: 14/10/2013). In this context, the ‘system’ seems to be mainly understood as the state apparatus. Three articles, for example, assert that Lampedusa is held “hostage of politics” (see Le Monde: 17/10/2013a). As such, the political elite are blamed for the distribution of a notion of exhausted capacities in Europe and a fear of asylum seekers and migrants in general. This is said to be connected to the growth of xenophobia among the European governments. Another article also asserts that the incident shows that “the reflex of sovereignty here, as well as in other domains, has proved to fail” (Le Monde: 08/10/2013b).

▪ **WHO? Actor Typifications**

In the articles in *Le Monde*, the illegal migrants are less presented by their individual destiny. Instead they tend to signify the African continent in general. Around 15 articles express compassion for the underdeveloped situation in Africa. Several articles, for example, describe the political situation in Eritrea where the situation of human rights is said to be deteriorated (see Le Monde: 09/10/2013d). One article also reports on the situation in Eritrea in more detail and perceives of the country as “half prison, half military casern” (Le Monde: 09/10/2013). It would lack democracy, a constitution and free press.

Europe, in contrast, is represented as a “pole of prosperity” (Le Monde: 08/10/2013b) which turns a blind eye to what is happening in Africa. Nevertheless, ‘Europe’ and ‘Africa’ are not understood as binary oppositions. Rather, such a view is explicitly criticized in many articles. This is indicated by the following quote: “This is not Africa. Africa is developing [...] but the impression is given that the south of the Mediterranean is a gigantic reservoir of a continent that dreams of coming to Europe” (Le Monde: 17/10/2013a). The ‘state’ or the ‘European administrations’ are seen as being responsible for the creation of such a binary opposition. The European and French government would invent an abstract, dangerous stranger and distribute xenophobia on the continent (Le Monde: 09/10/2013d). Furthermore, the European Union is presented as being ‘paralysed’ by its inner disunity. In effect, it is said to be powerless and futile what is indicated by the following quote: “I was searching Europe, in Mali, in Syria, at the Roman camps, but I could not find it anywhere.

In Brussels, I could not find anything else than mere accountants” (Le Monde: 11/10/2013b).

- **WHY? Attributions and Imputations of Causality**

A factor which is repeatedly evoked as the cause of the tragedy is the distribution of xenophobic attitudes by the government. More than a handful of articles argue that the political elite would be paralysed by “paranoia” and practice “propaganda” against the foreigner in general (Le Monde: 04/10/2013a). The criminalization of illegal migrants is thus perceived as a direct consequence of politics.

The xenophobic attitude of the ‘state’ is also seen as the cause of the increasing fortification and militarization of the European border what is, however, harshly criticized. One author for example argues that “the European solidarity does not exist in the context of the complex phenomenon of mass immigration from Africa” (Le Monde: 05/10/2013c).

The refugees themselves are not blamed for entering the European Union illegally since they are said to have no other choice than to flee the horrendous situation in their countries of origin. The deaths are mostly attributed to the failure of the EU to put up any means to allow asylum seekers a safe entry to Europe, such as human corridors or rescue at sea (Le Monde: 22/10/2013a). This, in turn, would empower people smugglers as is indicated by the following quote: “Paradoxically, the EU transforms the mafia into the unique agency to offer up hope to the people who want to traverse the Mediterranean Sea” (Le Monde: 09/10/2013c).

Nevertheless, the surveillance of the European border seems to be regarded from an ambivalent stance. On the one hand, the European border agency Frontex is criticized for “performing a war” (Le Monde 12/10/2013b). Another article asserts that the control and surveillance of the entire Mediterranean is impossible and would only present a short-term solution (Le Monde: 17/10/2013). On the other hand, the improvement of surveillance is repeatedly named as a solution to the ‘problem’ of illegal migration and the fight against people smugglers.

Another reason for the tragedy at Lampedusa is seen to be the inactivity of the European Union when it comes to actual solutions. The EU is perceived to be ‘paralysed’ by an “anyone-for-himself-mentality” (Le Monde: 05/10/2013d). It is argued that the European member states are unwilling to work together and thus that “Lampedusa is alone in the world” (Le Monde: 14/10/2013a). This inactivity of the EU in the aftermath of the

shipwreck is regarded with great dismay and becomes sharply criticized in many articles in the second half of October.

- **SO WHAT? Strategic Calculation**

The dismay with the European inactivity leads to the recurring call for immediate action in many articles in *Le Monde*. The shipwreck thus becomes a symbol for the urgent need to rethink the European immigration and asylum policies. This is illustrated by the following call on European leaders: “Act, fast! Manifest an international solidarity!” (Le Monde: 04/10/2013b). The article argues that the establishment of new immigration measures would “send a sign of humanity” what is urgently needed for the European Union (ibid.). In effect, the nature of concrete changes in the European immigration policy is repeatedly discussed and becomes particularly urgent in the second half of October. Many articles assert that such changes should take the shape of a better control of Europe’s external borders, a better coordination of rescue missions in the Mediterranean Sea and a common approach to asylum. This is aptly indicated by the following quote: “The solution is a common asylum policy, an inter-European share of immigration, means to reinforce control and surveillance and the fight against people smugglers” (Le Monde: 08/10/2013b).

The shipwreck also becomes a question of how Europe engages with global inequalities. As has been noted, articles assert that Europe has a special responsibility for the African continent. It should thus preoccupy itself more actively with its problems and increase development aid in order to change local conditions to the better (see Le Monde: 22/10/2013c). Similar to the storyline in *Der Spiegel*, the shipwreck thus also eschews discussions on the identity of Europe. An article for example argues that “Europe has to show conscience. We should not forget where we come from. We have to host refugees who flee from totalitarianism and oppression. In ignoring them, Europe turns its back on these values” (Le Monde: 05/10/2013c).