Global Migration – A Geopolitical Approach

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1   Introduction

'Global Migration – A Geopolitical Approach' this is the topic I chose for my bachelor thesis. My interest in this topic developed throughout the course of my studies.

When I started studying 'Social Work PLUS – Migration and Globalization' I did not have any concrete expectations of how my studies would look like. Before I started studying social work PLUS I had neither awareness for migration nor any political involvement.

I was walking around 'blindfolded'. My world was limited to my own life and the people I knew. But through my studies my horizon quickly started to widen. The topic of migration as well as that of refugees appeared on my radar. I took in a lot of new information and started processing it.

Through my internships I learned more and more about the restrictive refugee system in Germany and how social work is closely intertwined with nationality. Basically you are not entitled to social services when you do not possess the German nationality[1]. I started to wonder how such a system approach could possibly fit into the humanitarian mandate I associated with social work. Social work should be accessible to anyone who might benefit from its services. Starting from the perception that the German system of social work was designed in an unfair way, excluding people who did not meet the criteria of German nationality, I started to be interested in politics, migration policies, and the global perceptions of migration as well as with all issues relating to refugees.

So when I first heard of 'Geopolitics' it felt like I was rediscovering the world. Suddenly every issue I encountered had a geopolitical origin. Geopolitics was my new explanation for everything. I was curious to discover more about this discipline and how it could explain any past and current political situation. In fact I was so amazed by how everything made perfect sense, when trying to contemplate it from what I thought was a geopolitical perspective. Which is also why I started to think that explaining migration through the lens of geopolitics

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[1] This is an exaggerated statement that should in no case be regarded as empirically founded.

could be as eye-opening for someone else, as the pure discovery of the discipline of geopolitics had been for me. Therefore, when it came to choosing the topic of my bachelor thesis I decided to take the opportunity to discover how exactly geopolitics approaches global migration.

I must say that I had a 'crisis of meaning' when I started reading more and more about geopolitics. I had to realize that I fell for the promising 'god's eye view' of geopolitics. As soon as I had learned about geopolitics I had regarded it as an empirically founded and therefore true discipline. I did not question it once. But the more I read, the more I understood that geopolitics – like every kind of knowledge – should not be taken for true, but instead it should always be questioned and seen in its context of development. Through reading the geopolitical discourses that emerged throughout history I learned how a geopolitical discourse that was directed by pure interests could have a high impact on policies and politics without it being even noticed. I then remembered a quote from Descartes "I think, therefore I am". He says this in the context that this is the only reality that is acceptable and that anything else should be questioned. I tried to keep this critical spirit throughout my thesis.

Since this thesis is dealing with the influence of geopolitical relations on the push and pull factory, the flows and the routes of forced migration, I decided to first explore and define the basic concepts in order to be able to discuss them later.

In chapter two I will try to define Migration – in general as well as with a focus on forced migration. The emphasis on forced migration has to be seen in relation with the case study that I chose to expound. In order to render the currency of the topic more palpable, I will farther give some concrete figures.

Chapter three represents an attempt to elucidate the fuzziness of geopolitics. As a mean to do that, I will first present geopolitics in general and then try to explain the discourse of 'Critical Geopolitics', which further inspired me while writing this thesis. I will also shortly discuss the discourses of 'Feminist Geopolitics' and 'Anti-Geopolitics', both of them being constructive critiques.

In chapter four I will try to establish a theoretical link between geopolitics and migration with the intention of showing how migration could be analysed through a geopolitical lens. To reach this aim, I will examine at which different scales

geopolitics of migration might be played out as well as give a general overview of migration management tools that are currently employed.

In chapter five, in order to illustrate the fact that "global migrations mirror geopolitical relations" (Ashutosh, Mountz 2012: 337) I chose to present a case study on refugees fleeing all the way from Eritrea to Europe. First I will lay out a variety of push and pull factors that shape the decision to flee. Then I will describe the route(s) Eritrean refugees might take to reach their destinations. By describing their journey I hope to be able to visualize, how different geopolitical relations shape the journeys of Eritrean refugees and how shifting political situations might have geographical impacts on the exact routes taken. With the aim of exemplifying the border management practices described in chapter 4, I will further present specific border management practices in the form of 'European Response Mechanisms' currently employed.

In my conclusion I will sum up the main insights I gained as well as comment on the answer to the question "How are the geopolitical relations influencing the (push and pull) factors, the flows and the routes of forced migration illustrated with the case study of (forced) migration from Eritrea to Europe?"

2   Migration

2.1   Definition

"Human Migration is as old as humanity itself" (Manning, 2007, 11 – translated by Célia Heyer). Nonetheless, in social science the term migration has not been uniformly defined (Boeckh 2008: 363 – translated by Célia Heyer). The etymological signification of migration – stemming from the Latin verb 'migrare' – describes a movement from one place to another (Online Etymology Dictionary). Following definitions have been chosen for the purpose of this thesis.

The International Organization of Migration has defined migration as a process in which a person or a group of persons moves either within their state of residence or across international borders. This process of movement encloses any population movement – indifferent to its cause, length and composition, therefore including economic migrants, (internally) displaced people, refugees as well as many others (IOM 2011: 62-63). According to this definition a migrant is a person having gone or currently going through the process of migration, meaning that the person has changed its residence – within its state of origin or across international borders. Again IOM highlights the following precisions: the person's legal status, the voluntary or involuntary nature of its movement, the causes inducing its movement and the length of its stay do not matter to qualify the person as a migrant (IOM, 2017).

Different disciplines – such as anthropology, sociology, political science, economy, geography and others – have given different, sometimes broader sometimes narrower definitions of the process of migration. In any definition migration is the description of a process in which people move from one place to another (Boeckh 2008: 363 – translated by Célia Heyer). In order to further distinct different types of migration, Boeckh proposes four dimensions:

1. Spatial dimension – specifying whether the movement takes place on a regional, national or international scale,

2. Temporal dimension – defining whether the movement is temporary or permanent,

3. Causal dimension – indicating whether the movement was forcedly induced or a voluntary decision,

4. Quantitative dimension – designating whether the movement was an individual or a collective one (Boeckh 2008; 363 – translated by Célia Heyer).

Another central element characterizing a migratory movement might be the differentiation between orderly and irregular migration. Whereas orderly migration occurs when the person migrating moves respecting the laws and regulations regulating migration – meaning those concerning the procedure of exiting the country of origin, travelling and entering into the destination country – irregular migration is a term referring to the process when movement takes place without respecting the regulatory norms of receiving, transit and sending countries. An official, universal definition of irregular migration does not exist. In destination countries irregular migration is often seen as entering, staying or working in a country without having the necessary documents or authorizations. A sending country considers migration as irregular, when the crossing of an international border happens without a valid travel document. The term 'illegal migration' is mostly used in the context of human trafficking or migrant smuggling (IOM, 2017).

In many disciplines contributing to Migration Theory the factors that influence the decision of migrating are called push and pull factors (Johnson; White 2016:79; IOM, 2017). In this model of migration analysis the factors pushing the people to leave their countries [or residence] – being of social, economic, political or other nature – are called 'push' factors, whereas 'pull' factors describe the factors attracting them to their chosen destination country (IOM, 2017).

2.2   Forced Migration

Forced Migration is a category of migration that relates to the question whether the decision to migrate was taken voluntarily or forcedly induced. In this case, the migratory movement is characterized by a certain type of coercion – comprising man-made or nature induced threats to life or livelihood. It thereby encompasses the migratory movement of internally displaced people, refugees, people displaced by chemical, environmental or nuclear disasters as well as by famine or development projects (IOM, 2017).

2.2.3 Refugee

The internationally recognized, legal definition of a refugee is based on the United Nation's 1951 'Convention relating to the Status of Refugees'. It states that a refugee is a person who,

> "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it" (Art. 1 (A) (2), Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Art. 1A(2), 151 as modified by the 1967 Protocol).

Each country having signed the convention has then national legislation that ensures how it deals with refugees arriving on its territory and seeking asylum (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, 2017).

An asylum seeker can be defined as a person who seeks security from persecution or other severe harm in a different country than the one they habitually reside in and waits for the decision if – according to international and national law – they are granted the status of refugee. In general – if the decision is negative – the person must leave the country, following the regular procedure for persons not having the nationality and therefore residing in an irregular situation. The chance to stay still might be given on other grounds, such as humanitarian ones or related others (IOM 2011: 12).

2.3   Global Migration Trends (2015)

"We […] live in an age of migration" (Ellis; Wright 2016: 14). As the Factsheet "Global Migration Trends 2015" by IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC) states, the estimated number of migrants was higher than one billion in 2015. This one billion is composed of around 244 million international migrants – meaning people having their residence in a country they were not born in – and about 740 million internal migrants (GMDAC 2016: 5).

Among those one billion migrants about 65.3 million – representing the highest figure ever recorded– people are forcibly displaced due to conflict, human rights violations, persecution and generalized violence. The number of newly forcibly displaced persons for 2015 is estimated at around 8.6 million people. 40.8 million of the above-mentioned 65.3 forcibly displaced are internally displaced persons, while 21.3 million are refugees. 16.1 million of the 21.3 million refugees are under UNHCR mandate and 5.2 million are Palestinian refugees under the UNRWA mandate. The number of global refugees increased by 55% compared to 2011 (GMDAC 2016: 8).

The remaining 3.2 million of the total 65.3 million forcibly displaced are asylum seekers on the global scale. In 2015 1.3 million of those 3.2 million asylum applications were registered in the 28 member states of the European Union (EU). More than 50% of the asylum seekers having reached Europe were aged between 18-34 years and about 30% of them were minor. One fourth of these minors were registered as unaccompanied (GMDAC 2016: 9).

Irregular migration is hardly measurable on account of its illicit nature, the scarcity of data sources, the missing universal definition and its highly dynamic nature (GMDAC 2016: 11). The sources for estimations that are regarded as most reliable are the registered apprehensions along borders. Frontex (European Border and Coast Guard Agency) has estimated the number of people illegally crossing the external borders of the European Union – by sea or by land – at about 1.8 million in 2015, which is six times higher than in 2014 (280,000) (GMDAC 2016: 12). Nevertheless those figures are not totally reliable, because on the one hand they only represent counted border crossings – one person may cross different borders multiple times – which might lead to overestimations and on the other hand it is a number of detected border crossings – making the figures dependent on the effectiveness of the surveillance (GMDAC 2016: 12; Collyer; King 2016: 3).

Different routes can be taken in order to reach Europe. For instance, the Eastern Mediterranean route is the route from Turkey to the EU. The EU states where refugees generally first enter Europe taking this route are Greece, Bulgaria and Cyprus. In fact 2015 more than 900,000 irregular border crossings were registered in Greece and 93% of them occurred by sea. 88% of the refugees

taking this route in 2015 were from the Arabic Republic of Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq. The Central Mediterranean route – less used during 2015 – leads from North Africa to Italy or Malta. 153,842 refugees were counted entering the EU in Italy by the sea compared to 170,000 registered in 2014. Among these 153,842 refugees entering Italy 39,162 were Eritrean, 22,237 were Nigerian, 12,433 were Somalis and 8,932 were Sudanese nationals. Other countries of origin such as Egypt, Syria were represented as well. The journey along the Central Mediterranean route begins in Libya in 80-90% of the cases, otherwise in Egypt (GMDAC 2016: 12).

Due to the fact that all figures are based on estimations and that different sources have been used for this thesis, there might be slight differences in the figures describing the same phenomenon.

3   Geopolitics

"A chaque époque, à chaque civilisation, sa géographie, sa vision et sa représentation" – Moreau Defarges (2005). "Each era, each civilization, has its geography, its vision and its representation" – Moreau Defarges (2005) – translated by Célia Heyer.

The term 'Geopolitics' has first been coined in the 19th century by a Swedish political scientist by the name of Rudolf Kjellen. The concept of geopolitics on the other hand has not been defined clearly until the present day. On the contrary: the meaning of geopolitics has changed many times throughout history. It has been and still is constantly evolving in relation to the changing structures of the world order as well as the changing historical contexts. Therefore it is a particularly difficult task to give a specific definition of geopolitics (Ó Tuathail 2003a: 1).

Its original meaning proclaimed a general involvement of geography and politics – defining it as a form of knowledge that analyses the relationship between the physical realities of the earth and the [practiced] politics (Ó Tuathail 2003a: 1). Since then, several people have employed and re-defined the concept of geopolitics. Each time its meaning has to be seen in its context of use. Today a common agreement is, that geopolitics is a discourse of world politics dealing with geographical dimensions of power and competitions between states (Ó Tuathail 2006: 1). Cohen defines geopolitics in a similar way: "the analysis of the interaction between, on the one hand, geographical settings and perspectives and, on the other hand, political processes" (Cohen 2003: 12). Political processes mean international forces as well as regional and national ones influencing those, whereas the geographical settings describe patterns and features of geography composing multi-layered regions. Both – political processes and geographical settings – are regarded as being dynamic and constantly influencing each other. Geopolitics is the discipline dealing with the outcomes of this counterinfluenceing (ibid). Geopolitics is used to explain the political map of the world, which in the logic of critical geopolitics might also be called adopting a 'god's eye view' (Ó Tuathail 2003a: 1).

According to Colin Flint it is important to use more than one definition of geo-politics in order to be able to analyse, understand and criticize world politics (Flint 2012: 31). Therefore this chapter will try to provide a basic understanding of 'critical geopolitics' as well as an introduction to the feminist geopolitics discourse and anti-geopolitics discourse.

3.1   Critical Geopolitics

One of the current discourses of geopolitics is the so-called 'Critical Geopolitics'. In the discourse of critical geopolitics the basic, underlying assumption is that knowledge can never be value-free and neutral (Ó Tuathail 2003a: 7). Therefore knowledge is a form of exercising power. Foucault described the power-knowledge-dynamic in the following way: "the exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power" (as cited in: Ó Tuathail 2003a: 3). Considering this dynamic, critical geopolitics discourse argues that the nature of geopolitical knowledge is essentially contested and always embedded in power relations (Ó Tuathail 2003a: 3; 11; Ó Tuathail 2003b: 17). It cannot be neutral, it is instead a resource for policy decisions as well as for political arguments (Dalby, 2003, 180). It is furthermore regarded as relevant that politics are always closely interwoven with interests. Even though at first it might look like geopoliticians employ factual arguments and give a fact-based description of the world and thereby stay apolitical, geopolitics is indeed a political instrument (ibid; Ó Tuathail 2003a: 3).

According to the critical geopoliticians the word "discourse" itself indicates cultural and political influence (Ó Tuathail 2003a: 3). Thereby geopolitical discourses can be regarded as descriptions, representations and writings about geography and international politics with the intention of establishing and asserting their own truths (ibid: 3; 7) In order to illustrate the power relations involved in knowledge production as well as the way in which a truth is established through a geopolitical discourse the chapter 'The Case of Migration from Eritrea to Europe' should serve as an example.

Geopolitical discourses establish themselves in a way, that they produce their own institutions, intellectuals and visions of the globe as well as the relations of

power dominating it. (Ó Tuathail 2003a: 7). It is important to add, that the 'intellectuals of statecraft', as they are called, who offer problem-solving oriented imperative and normative rules for the strategy and conduct of statecraft are themselves embedded in networks and institutions. These networks and institutions in turn are instruments of privilege, access and power. Furthermore, from the perspective of critical geopolitics, ideology has always played a major role in the formulation of the geopolitical discourses throughout history (ibid: 8-9).

3.2   Feminist Geopolitics

Feminist geopolitics can be seen as a part of the critical geopolitics discourse that challenges the exclusion inherent in it. In its critique of exclusion practices, it targets above all the reproduction of geopolitics as a masculinist enterprise, as well as the failure of the geopolitical discourses to acknowledge feminist geopolitics (Massaro; Williams 2013: 569). Feminist geopolitics were created with the intention of enriching the critical geopolitics discourse by being a "reparative critique" to it (ibid: 567). As a combination of feminist geography and critical geopolitics, its analysis mainly focuses on the "forms of power, oppression, and resistances at and between multiple scales" (ibid).

It is a subdiscipline observing the impacts of different geopolitical issues on different scales. These scales are varying from the personal scale as a site for reproduction of geopolitical power to the state scale being the commonly regarded source of geopolitical power (Massaro; Williams 2013: 567; 574; 568). Through the integration and highlighting of oppositional geopolitical discourses the democratization of geopolitics can be achieved. This in turn allows the discipline to distance itself from the inherent elitism and further creates a conflicting and multidimensional geopolitical landscape (Gilmartin; Kofman 2004: 121-122). The shifted focus of analysis implies a reworking of the public-private distinction done by geopolitics (Hyndman 2000: 4). Whereas traditional and critical geopolitics strictly operated within the interstate relations, feminist geopolitics links the body, the home, the local and the national to each other as well as to the global (ibid: 3). :

In addition, it demonstrates that the seemingly apolitical, feminine private is in fact a key aspect in the operations of global power (Massaro; Williams 2013: 570). It renders evident how power relations are linked throughout different scales and illustrates how global processes of different kinds are being experienced in localized, everyday embodied ways (Hyndman 2000: 3). Moreover feminist geopolitics – through its multiscale approach – include and promote the margin-alized groups' perspectives, attitudes and experiences, thereby aiming to create a socially juster world (Massaro; Williams 2013: 573).

The reworking of the scales of analysis as well as the reconsidering of the public-private divide has led to the development of new questions, answers and possibilities for the geopolitical analysis. The current feminist geopolitics focus on the geopolitics of securization. "Securization refers broadly to the processes whereby issues, spaces, and subjectivities become targets of regulation and surveillance by state and non-state actors in the name of ensuring 'security' at multiple scales, most often the national" (Massaro; Williams 2013: 572). One of the results of the analysis of securization is that the security given by the state is unequally distributed across gender, nationality, race and sexuality.

3.3   Anti-Geopolitics

Through the lens of critical geopolitics, one can observe that the dominant geopolitical discourses throughout history were "constructed from positions and locations of political, economic, and cultural power and privilege" (Routledge, 2003, 245). All this also means that the former famous geopolitical discourses were mainly related to statesmanship, whereas rebellious geopolitical discourses were not given enough attention (ibid). The said discourses – now called anti-geopolitics – were and are challenges to the state's and the elite's power positions. They could also be called 'geopolitics from below' (ibid). Those alternative visions of geopolitics were sidelined and the geopolitical discourse was – and partly still is – state-centred since mainly practiced by geopolitical strategists (Gilmartin; Kofman 2004: 119). Several different anti-geopolitical discourses have been documented throughout history (Routledge 2003: 245-255).

Anti-geopolitics further reflect a political, ethical and cultural power inside society challenging the assumption that the state is representing the community's interests (Routledge 2003: 245). It is a statement, that the political world is perceived from a different perspective than the one the state is advocating (ibid).

The different forms of anti-geopolitics can vary from discordant intellectual discourses to strategically organized social movements. Their range of influence can stretch from regional to international (Routledge 2003: 245).

4 Geopolitics of Migration

"Refugee journeys are geopolitical journeys; people on the move are both authors of these narratives, as they navigate geopolitical terrain, and expressions of broader geopolitical relations at work that structure their mobility" (Ashutosh; Mountz 2012: 352). Hence the pathways of migration can serve as indicators for geopolitical relations (Hyndman 2012: 251).

4.1 Scales of Geopolitics of Migration

"The migrant is an embodiment of movement […]" (Hyndman 2004: 174), which is why mobility should be theorized by analysing individual stories (Hyndman 2004: 174; Ashutosh; Mountz 2012: 340). Naturally, analysing mobility through narratives of individuals represents a form of situated knowledge. It is nonetheless possible to trace the state's role by analysing the mobility of individuals and groups (Hyndman 2004; 174), since the nation-state is central in controlling the mobilities of migrants. In order to control migrant mobilities it operates in specific places, times and geopolitical contexts (Ashutosh; Mountz 2012: 337). However "state practices aimed at limiting movement are challenged through the agency of migrants" (ibid: 338). This in turn makes clear that bodies neither are always self-directed in their actions, nor are they limited to being controlled from above (Hyndman 2004: 174). Instead they renegotiate the geopolitics of migrant mobilities through their coping strategies adapted to governmental migration management practices (Ashutosh; Mountz 2012: 345).

4.2 Law as a geopolitical instrument

Law – in the way it is formulated, applied and suspended – can be used as a geopolitical instrument (Ashutosh; Mountz 2012: 336). An example for the geopolitical dimensions of formulating law is the ambiguity of legal categories, such as the 'refugee'. Legal categories practice exclusion and inclusion at the same time. Furthermore they are usually conceived to discipline knowledge and life as a mean to realize society's dominant interests (Chimni 2009: 12). In other

words: the legal definition of a refugee has never been impartial; it was "designed to serve State policy" (ibid: 16).

"Refugee flows are inherently geopolitical projects and have been since their inception and codification in the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugee" (Ashutosh; Mountz 2012: 336). The signatory states of the 1951 Convention and of the following 1967 Protocol have developed their own procedures and standards to evaluate asylum claims, reflecting the spatial organization of power revolving around the state (ibid: 339). The interpretation of the Convention is left to the signatory states: each state can decide whether an individual legitimately seeks asylum or not (ibid: 337). The differences between the national procedures is best reflected in the fact that a person might be a refugee in one country, but not in another, although the person's situation is the same. Therefore the process of determining whether a person is a refugee or not is a geopolitical process as well (ibid: 335-336; Hyndman 2012: 251). The selectivity of states when deciding upon the allowance to enter its territory is a form of border policing, which makes it a way to reaffirm state sovereignty (Ashutosh; Mountz 2012: 351). In fact the asylum seeking process is seen as one of the key strategies for governments to shape migrant mobility (ibid: 336).

4.3   Trends in migration management

The highly restricted access that refugees encounter when trying to seek asylum in an industrialized country (Hyndman 2004: 179) is partly related to its 'sedentarist bias'. This relates to the circumstance that refugees are regarded as a state of abnormality in the context of an understanding of belonging and citizenship that is centred on the state (Hyndman 2012: 248). A state's urge to control the mobility of others can be explained by it perceiving migration and migrants as threats to its own state security (ibid: 246; 249). When migration is perceived as a threat the act of harnessing fear is considered a useful tool that allows for stricter measures that would otherwise have been objects of discussions (ibid: 246-247).

The analysis of migration is vital to understanding the current geopolitical landscape (Hyndman 2012: 249). In fact the displacement management is an

important focus of analysis (ibid: 249). The new practices of migration management of destination countries have (spatially) shifted offshore: migration is managed closer to the source and away from their own territory (Hyndman 2004: 180). A detailed example of the offshore migration management will be provided in the subchapter 'European Response Mechanisms'.

Often states partly outsource the management of migration to UN agencies and other NGOs[2]. Their task is to help people, for example by protecting civilians in conflict zones, and thereby limiting their access to protection on the particular state's territory. Indeed, containment is the new approach to human displacement. This indicates that the human rights as guiding principles have been replaced by geopolitics (Hyndman 2004: 180; Hyndman 2012: 245). Another practice used in migration management is that of detention. Nowadays detention often gets outsourced, which leads to the situation that any human rights abuse occurring during detention cannot be blamed on the state, since the subcontractor is responsible for what happens in the detention facilities (Hiemstra; Mountz 2013: 7). Borders are externalized and securitized which results in a respatialization of forced migration (Hyndman 2012: 245; 247; 249). The securization of borders is best exemplified in the convergence of geopolitics and biopolitics. New laws, policies and border practices are centred on the biometric management of outsiders (ibid: 246). A concrete example of the biometric management of foreigners will be provided in the subchapter 'Hotspot Approach'.

Next to that, rendition is an important characteristic of current migration management. Deportations have increased, which has the effect that more and more diplomatic negotiations take place. Those negotiations serve to develop readmission agreements as well as bilateral deals. It is important to add that the agreements and deals are made between asymmetrically situated parties (Hyndman 2012: 250). For the purpose of illustrating further the characteristics of bilateral deals, an example relating to the case study is presented in the subchapter 'Friendship Treaty 2008 – A Bilateral Agreement'.

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[2] Non-governmental Organizations

All of these practices of migration management renegotiate and alter the meanings of borders (ibid: 251).

4.4   Chaos and crisis narrative

In the context of immigration the narration of chaos and crisis is used to expand the sovereign reach as well as the geopolitical reach of a state (Hiemstra; Mountz 2013: 1). Chaos is here defined as disorder and confusion, and crisis as a situation characterized by a sudden change causing alarm. Their employment in the immigration context evokes instability, danger and panic. The places characterized by narratives of chaos and crisis are called thresholds. Often those thresholds are zones of transition, borderlands between regions that have great economic disparities (ibid: 2). "Economic disparity among regions often produces fraught sites of crossing and policing, and therefore crisis" (ibid: 3). Narratives of risk, threat and danger arise when presumed or real disparities in economic resources between the migrants and the citizens of the destination country exist. At the base of those narratives is the fear of scarcity of resources. In this context migrants are rendered greedy. In regard to the scales, cultural and racial markers reflect the real or presumed disparities at the bodily scale. As a consequence individuals are regarded differently due to their outer appearance that is associated with a specific economic status (ibid.). Another characteristic of the borderlands that migrants cross, is the ambiguity concerning legality and jurisdiction (ibid: 2).

As mentioned above the language of chaos and crisis is a means to an end: it serves to assert geopolitical power. In form of the expansion of sovereign power and claims. This expansion of territorial claims represent the right to keep the threat away from state territory, by fighting it close to its source. This is embodied by the current trend in migration management of externalizing asylum processing and intercepting and processing migrants offshore (Hiemstra; Mountz 2013: 2). The territorial expansion related to the chaos and crisis narrative is an international phenomenon (ibid: 3).

There is also a financial dimension to the narration of crisis and chaos: "In the neoliberal era, narratives of crisis are mobilized by both public and private

interests who gain financially from hardening immigration enforcement regimes" (Hiemstra; Mountz 2013: 4).

The feelings of insecurity that are created when people cross borders are related to the fact that "borders […] function as physical perimeters and parameters for establishing and shaping national identity, economic and ontological security, and particular racial and ethnic imaginaries" (Hiemstra; Mountz 2013: 4). The resulting insecurity consecutively allows for intensified bordering processes (ibid.). This intensification of border enforcement on the other hand leads to higher risks for migrants and more perilous migration routes (ibid: 5).

5   The case of (forced) migration from Eritrea to Europe

A case study is always limited in the generalizability of its validity. Indeed its validity is limited to the studied sample. In the special case of the study of migration from Eritrea to Europe the validity is further limited by the fact, that the living conditions inside Eritrea can only be assumed upon statements from Eritreans having left the country – for the most part refugees. The trustworthiness of those statements must at least be questioned, above all considering that the knowledge that was produced by persons having fled the country cannot be back checked due to the difficulty of entering the country (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 6; 9; Müller 2016: 2-3).

It is further important to state, that in the context of this bachelor thesis the case study of the flight from Eritrea to Europe can only be described in a limited complexity.

5.1   The (geo)political situation of Eritrea

Since the year 2000 Eritrea is the largest refugee producing country in comparison to its population size (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 7). In 2014 UNHCR registered a total of more than 360,000 Eritrean refugees worldwide (ibid: 40). At the end of 2015 the estimated number rose to 411,000 refugees and people in refugee-like situations. As already mentioned above, the figures are only estimations, since the nature of a refugee movement is clandestine and therefore not measurable. Nonetheless experts have estimated that about 60,000 Eritreans leave their country throughout the course of a year. In turn, this means that each month an average of 5,000 Eritreans flee their country of origin (Hooper; Horwood 2016: 3).

"Eritreans pose a 'special case' among displaced populations due to the reasons why they leave their homeland, the manner in which they do so, and the special risks and vulnerabilities they face in transit" (Hooper; Horwood 2016: 2). It is the purpose of this case study to get a better overview of the push and pull factors

influencing the decision to leave Eritrea as well as the challenges encountered along the way.

The reasons why Eritreans leave their home country and choose to flee all the way to Europe are discussed in the form of a dichotomy. Whereas the majority of research and reports state that ongoing human rights abuses initiated by the government are the main reason why Eritreans begin their journey as refugees, other claim that Eritreans can be classified as 'economic migrants'. The first narrative is the more popular one and especially widespread among human rights associations, whereas the second narrative has been mainly introduced by transnational and national immigration authorities (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 6; 7-8).

As a matter of fact, Eritrea is ranked one of the poorest countries in the world (Hooper; Horwood 2016: 4).

Next to the several push factors driving Eritreans out of their country, pull factors do exist, that attract them to other countries. The interaction between those intimately interrelated factors "is further complicated as these drivers or the weight assigned to them by the individual decision-maker may change across time and space as the individual traverse the flight path and makes new experiences, forms new contracts and finds new opportunities" (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 39).

5.1.1 Push factors

5.1.1.1   Compulsory National Service

According to different studies the most commonly cited reason by Eritrean refugees, as to why they leave their country, is the compulsory national service (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 51; Hooper; Horwood 2016: 4; Wittenberg 2017: 6). The national service for itself is not the problem, but the way it is organized, its length as well as its abusive character is what Eritrean refugees criticize (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 51). The Eritrean government justifies the indefinite

military service with the 'no war no peace' situation that resulted from the Ethiopia-Eritrea war 1998-2000. This war revolved around border issues. Even though the Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission decided that the town of Badme should be accorded to Eritrea, Ethiopia refuses to implement this decision. The Eritrean government utilizes this situation as a pretext for keeping up its militarization (Müller 2016: 4).

In its origins the military service was established to reconstruct the country after 30 years of independence, to construct a strong defence as well as to strengthen patriotism among Eritreans. It enjoyed a relatively large popularity. The service was originally limited to a duration of 18 months. It was mandatory for men and women aged between 18 and 50 years. However, after the Ethiopia-Eritrea war in 1998-2000, the government introduced the 'Warsay-Ykealo Development Campaign'. It left the military service without any limit regarding its duration. Now Eritreans first have to complete six months of military training and are then assigned either to civil service or to a military unit. Even though deployed in civil service, the individuals are still considered soldiers and can be mobilized for war if needed (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 51-52).

Exemption can be granted from the military service in a few exceptions:

- individuals having served in the independence war;
- women being pregnant or married or mothers – although some testimonies suggest that this exemption is granted arbitrarily – ;
- individuals with physical or mental disabilities;
- leaders of the four recognized religions;
- and in a few cases, people are granted exemption on educational grounds;

(Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 52-53).

Usually individuals are conscripted directly after having completed the 12th year of school – either by their school or by the regional administration. Sometimes persons are enlisted through roundups. When individuals fail to attend the national service and get discovered, they get punished. The penalties for disobeying are codified in the National Service Act as well as in -the Eritrean Criminal Code. (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 53).

The exact amount of the compensation that is attributed to those conscripted in the national service is uncertain. Nevertheless it is generally claimed to be insufficient to cover the needs of the conscripted individuals and their families (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 54).

The government has established a certain system of surveillance and control including the issuance of travel passes and ID documents. Those documents have to be presented anytime at any checkpoint inside the country. In this context it is further important to stress, that exit visas may only be granted to individuals having completed their military service (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 55; 56).

5.1.1.2   *Human Rights Violations*

The rapid deterioration of the human rights situation is especially noticeable since 2001 – in the context of the suspension of the Constitution. Since then the solely tolerated political opinion is that of the government. The United Nations Human Rights Commission issued a report in 2015 in which the political realities of Eritrea are described in details. The conclusion of the report is that the country is being ruled by fear and not by law (O Brhane 2016: 34). The report further states that the human rights violation in Eritrea, that are committed by its government, are of gross nature and widespread (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 12). In fact several monitoring agencies have ranked Eritrea among the worst countries of the world concerning human rights and basic freedoms (Hooper; Horwood 2016: 4). Many studies name human rights violations, political oppression and religious persecution as the main push factors (Lijnders; Robinson 2013: 138; Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 12).

The freedom of expression is – even though it was already restricted before 2001 – still further constricted: anyone who protests or questions the Eritrean government or its policies is harshly and systematically silenced (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 58). Another freedom that has been severely curtailed is the freedom of religion. In the year 2002 the Eritrean government has banned all faith practices that do not belong to the four faiths officially recognized by the state. These are: the Eritrean Catholic Church, the (Sunni) Islam, the Eritrean

Evangelical Church and the Eritrean Orthodox Tewahedo Church. Any other religion is suspected to pose threats to the blanket sovereign power (ibid: 59). The arbitrary nature of arrests and detentions too is seen as critical – mainly when individuals choose to question or oppose the government. Further the conditions under which individuals are detained are described as incommunicado and inhumane. Often, according to reports, individuals are put into overcrowded cells totally lacking of hygiene. Allegedly the rations given to prisoners are insufficient. They suffer torture, mistreatment and forced labour. Torture in Eritrean prisons is seen as a mean to extricate a confession, a punishment or a way to gain information (ibid: 59-60).

The flight from Eritrea is perceived as a way to escape the authoritarianism of the regime that is limiting opportunities and freedoms (Sahan Founadtion; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 12). Considering the above described human rights situation in the country and the fact that a fast and long-term effective change is not to be expected, most migrants leaving Eritrea search for a durable solution (Hooper; Horwood 2016: 2)

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5.1.1.3   *Expectations*

Like all societies, the Eritrean society is composed of different systems of norms and values that co-exist. In the Eritrean case such value systems can be the norms and values introduced und sustained by the government, 'traditional' ethnic norms and values, as well as religious doctrines. Each of the value systems codify the responsibilities and behaviours assigned to the individual. The different types of expectations are societal and family expectations on the one hand and individual expectations on the other hand (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 62-63).

The majority of the Eritrean systems of norms and values revolve around the intergenerational solidarity. Men are generally expected to be responsible for the financial support of the family. A popular and prestigious way to support the family financially is through remittances. They are considered a safety net for the families still living in the decaying country. For those men who stayed in Eritrea, it is rather difficult to fulfil the intergenerational duty. The government expects

them to attend the compulsory military service and its compensation is not sufficient to ensure them or their families the requested financial support. They might have to make the choice to either adhere to the norms and values of their government – by getting conscripted – or to fulfil their 'traditional' duties by refusing to serve in the military and by leaving the country in order to grant their families the needed financial support (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 63).

The individual expectations are closely related to what the individual has as personal values, hopes and wishes for the future. Examples can be the wish to establish a family and have the opportunity to spend time with them or to get an education as well as an employment, to be financially secure instead of living with the minimum. Most of these values are incompatible with those of the state. Considering the amount of young Eritreans fleeing the country, the importance of personal fulfilment in the decision to start the journey of migration might have increased significantly in the globalized world (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 63-64).

In respect to that it seems like economy as well as the improvement of living conditions might be part of the factors pushing Eritreans out of their country (Wittenberg 2017: 6).

5.1.1.4   *Interconnected Push Factors*

While the factors pushing people out of Eritrea were artificially divided to get a better overview, they are in reality interdependent on various levels. Therefore Holm Røsberg and Tronvoll establish a factor called 'the perceived lack of opportunities and hope for any viable and desirable future' which they regard as the primary driver of Eritrean migration and refugee flows. This driver relates to the fact that the national service is seen as a synonym for the impossibility of building a meaningful future. Additionally the extremely constrained economy further limits individuals in their chances for a viable future. Moreover the current system does not allow for an alternative path, instead punishing those who might oppose the regulations or question the system. Even though migration is dangerous and expensive, it is regarded as a mean to escape the living situation

defined by an authoritarian regime and increases the opportunities of fulfilling the own expectations and wishes (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 65).

5.1.2 Pull factors

The raised opportunities of long-term employment, family reunification and the improved access to education are generally categorized as pull factors for migration on the Central Mediterranean route (Wittenberg, 2017, 7). By increasing the chances of joining existing social networks abroad, the EU Directive on Family Reunification might also be regarded as a factor (ibid., 7; 8). The prospect of a better life is attractive for migrants as well as refugees (ibid: 8). Another presumed pull factor is the extremely high average rate of refugee recognition for Eritreans in Europe, which is higher than 90% (ibid).

5.1.2.1   Economic opportunities

The Eritrean economy has been struggling ever since the country's independence owing to droughts, restrictive economic policies and scarcity of resources. This resulted in a stagnating growth. Economic reasons can therefore be considered as explanations as to why Eritreans leave their country. Moreover, when set in the context of the 'traditional' value system and individual expectations as mentioned above, economy seems to build at least an important part of the factors pushing individuals out of their country. A specific role is further attributed to economic reasons concerning the motivation for secondary migration (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 67-68).

5.1.2.2   Citizenship – rights and restrictions

Citizens of Eritrea are approached differently whether they reside in the diaspora or inside the country. While living in Eritrea, the only opportunity to achieve full citizenship rights is to complete the compulsory military service. Whereas the diaspora, considered as loyal to the state, has always enjoyed a great consideration throughout history. In order to support its country financially, the diaspora is required to pay an income tax of two percent. This contribution is collected through official and semi-official representations of the Eritrean

government all over the world. In return the Eritrean diaspora might be exempted from national service and further enjoy full citizenship rights, such as operating private businesses, accessing important certificates, acquiring land parcels in Eritrea, being free to enter and exit Eritrea anytime, as well as inheriting from relatives that live inside the country. (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 68).

5.1.2.3   'Aspirations of Modernity'

In literature about migration and its drivers, it is broadly discussed that the information flow and social networks play a key role in the decision-making process of each individual. Individuals might develop through these the wish to be part of the global capitalist order and enjoy the lifestyle that they regard as pertaining to it. This is what Belloni called 'aspiration for modernity'. She does not limit modernity to the mere comfort or the material value a so-called modern society might procure, but extends it to its symbolic representation of the fulfilment of unsatisfied freedom desires (Holm Røsberg; Tronvoll 2017: 69).

Another part of this pull factor is, that through informal networks the refugees and migrants receive the information that it is almost guaranteed that they are granted asylum. Moreover, the information that attractive entitlements go with the recognized refugee status circulate as well. Through the new technologies they can further establish a virtual proximity with the diaspora (Hooper; Horwood 2016: 8).

5.2   Migration routes

"This movement is heavily influenced by a variety of interconnected factors, including immigration policies and border control in North Africa and Europe; shifts in the main countries of origin of refugees and migrants; changing social, political, economic, and environmental conditions in countries of origin, transit and destination; weather and seasonal patterns; and the adaptability of smuggling networks" (Wittenberg 2917: 3). Migration patterns may vary accordingly to shifts in the various interconnected factors (ibid).

The irregular migration out of the Horn of Africa is one that is highly organized by criminal groups leading sophisticated smuggling networks. Those organized criminal groups are deriving huge profits from the movements of mass migration (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 5; 16).

According to the investigations of Ethiopian authorities, there are three main routes out of the Horn of Africa taken not only by Eritreans but also by Somalis and Ethiopians:

1. Refugees and migrants from Eritrea both travel to Addis Ababa or to the border crossings of Humera and Metema, from whereon they can travel to Sudan and then further to Libya. Not all of them go further, some simply stop in one of the countries along this way. As an alternative route, some migrants and refugees go from Sudan to Egypt and try to continue their journey by boat from ports close to Alexandria. The journey from Sudan to Libya is characterized by many different dangers, such as the selling off to ransom collectors or being dumped in the desert to wait for the next transporter. In Libya refugees and migrants encounter the risks of being detained, beaten and/or tortured as well as being abducted and executed by the Islamic State (IS). For women, the risk of being raped is particularly high. Many refugees and migrants choose to continue their journey by crossing the Central Mediterranean (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 10).

2. The second route starts either in Eritrea or in Ethiopia. Migrants first cross the border to Kenya and then move onwards to Tanzania. Leaving Tanzania behind them, they head to South Africa. Then they might continue the journey to Latin America and finally end up in the United States (Sahan Foundation; Security Sector Program 2016: 10).

3. The third principal migration route out of the Horn of Africa is mainly used by Somalis and Ethiopians. They depart from their home countries and either cross the Red Sea or the Gulf of Aden, in order to reach one of the Gulf countries. Few of the Ethiopian refugees and migrants first go to Djibouti and then cross the sea to go to Yemen (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Section Program 2016: 11).

The following parts of this chapter will try to further analyse the first route – also called the East Africa route – and its 'continuation' by the Central Mediterranean route.

(Figure 1)

5.2.1 The East Africa route: From Eritrea to Libya

As described above the East Africa route – in the case of Eritreans – starts in Eritrea and leads through Ethiopia and Sudan, ending in Libya (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 10; Wittenberg 2017: 11).

Some Eritrean refugees claim to have left Eritrea with the help of others – mostly being human smugglers – while others claim to have left their country on their own, travelling on remote roads. The ones claiming to have left Eritrea on their own assert to only having contacted smugglers upon arrival in Ethiopia or Sudan (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 29).

5.2.1.1   Ethiopia

Ethiopia and its capital city Addis Ababa are considered as a frequent first stop for migrants and refugees from Eritrea (Wittenberg, 2017, 11). In fact between January and August 2015, 34,451 Eritreans were registered to have crossed the border to Ethiopia. The total number of Eritreans living in Ethiopia in August 2015 was estimated at more than 140,000 by the UNHCR (Sahan Foundation; IGAD

Security Sector Program 2016: 9). Even though the recent history between Eritrea and Ethiopia was ridden by conflict (BBC News 2017), many Eritreans still choose to go to Ethiopia. Some consider Ethiopia as a destination country although this perception might be changing due to the harsh conditions in Ethiopian refugee camps (Hooper; Horwood 2016: 5-6; 11). Ethiopia has instead become a major crossroad to exit the Horn of Africa by one of the three above descripted routes (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 10). The migrants and refugees choosing to continue their journey, once in Addis Ababa, usually try to find a smuggler that helps them to go all the way to Khartoum, Sudan (Wittenberg 2017: 11).

5.2.1.2   Sudan

Sudan is considered to be an important transit country (Wittenberg 2017: 11; Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 22). High numbers of migrants simply pass through Sudan using networks that are well coordinated in all aspects relevant to human smuggling. Then again many migrants and refugees – specifically Eritreans – consider it as a potential destination country (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 22). In October 2015 the UNHCR counted 75,883 Eritreans in Sudan (ibid: 10).

> "Eastern Sudan has long been notorious as a zone for various types of smuggling and trafficking. The two principal routes pass through the Kassala and Gederef areas, where smugglers take advantage of large, poorly controlled refugee camps to avoid government interference. From here, the routes bifurcate, with some migrants continuing their journey westwards, towards Khartoum and its environs, while others turn north towards Egypt and the Sinai" (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 22).

The bifurcation of the road can partly be explained by the danger of being kidnapped in Eastern Sudan (Lijnders; Robinson 2013: 137-154), which is why Eritreans try to go directly to Khartoum (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 10). The human smuggling and trafficking network operating out of Eastern Sudan is closely tied to the Rashaida tribe. Other actors in this network

of ransom kidnapping allegedly are individuals within the Sudanese law enforcement, Eritrean collaborators and Sudanese locals (Lijnders; Robinson 2013: 146). The most popular abduction site used by this network is the Eritrea-Sudan border. The geography of Eastern Sudan actually represents a border by itself: it is marked on the Western side by the desert and on the Eastern side by the mountains. As one of the poorest Sudanese regions it is underdeveloped as well as socially and politically marginalized (ibid). When Eritreans enter Sudan and are not intercepted by law enforcement authorities guiding them to refugee camps, they are most likely to be abducted when they start searching for the camps on their own. As a counter-measure UNHCR has started to establish reception and screening centres for safe ways to refugee camps (ibid: 147).

Even though the members of the Rashaida tribe are not always directly involved in the process of kidnapping, they represent the common thread in the narratives of refugees. The members of the Rashaida tribe generally reside in Sudan and/or Eritrea and have political interests and connections in both countries. They are descendants of the Arab-speaking Bedouins. Given the fact, that they have multiple citizenships, they can travel freely back and forth across borders. They do usually have strong business connections to Egypt, where they sell their camels. All of this facilitates their involvement in smuggling and trafficking activities and eases their selling of the migrants to the Bedouin tribes in the Sinai, Egypt (Lijnders; Robinson 2013: 148-150).

The Sudanese authorities involved in the process of kidnapping and selling migrants and refugees are mostly working in security posts close to the border. Due to their remote location they are less supervised by superiors. Moreover usually their salaries are not so high. Both of these factors raise the liability of them getting involved into criminal activities (Lijnders; Robinson 2013: 150).

The Eritrean collaborators are mostly appearing in the roles of intermediaries and translators. The extent of their collaboration varies individually – especially concerning their involvement in abuse and torture practices. Their participation, in general, is chosen in some cases and forced in others (Lijnders; Robinson 2013: 150-151).

The other direction of the bifurcating road leads to Libya. In order to be smuggled to Libya, most of the migrants and refugees are brought to transit hubs close to Khartoum. One of those transit hubs, 'Hajar', is widely cited in many refugee narratives. 'Hajar' is the final stopover before migrants are moved to the South-Eastern part of Libya (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 22).

5.2.1.3   Libya

"Libya, which has historically been a major destination for sub-Saharan migrants, has recently become a major transit country along the Central Mediterranean route for refugees and migrants fleeing violence and instability in the Middle East, Eritrea, Nigeria and Sudan" (Wittenberg 2017: 3). Above all, the transformation of Libya from a destination country into a transit country is significant in the changing political context. During the Gaddafi-Regime many migrant workers were attracted to Libya, but as the regime fell migrants and refugees – among them many Eritreans – moved onwards to Malta and Italy (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program, 2016, 13). While Libya was still led by Gaddafi, the policies with the neighboring countries were centred around illicit trafficking. The Libyan government turned a blind eye to the trafficking activities and in turn the other countries gave their political support (Toaldo 2015: 9). In concordance with the state collapse between the years of 2012 and 2014 the smuggling of migrants and refugees escalated (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 13). Even though state institutions were already weak – even when Gaddafi was still the head of the state – the outbreak of the civil war only intensified the weakness (Toaldo 2015: 3). From mid-2014 onwards the numbers of migrants passing through Libya further increased which has to be seen in the context that due to the Libyan forces leaving the Sudanese border, the border control collapsed (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 13). Any kind of political cooperation with Libya is rendered enormously difficult since the government that is theoretically in charge, effectively does not have any power. "In fact, no one is really in charge, and the basic elements of sovereignty such as law enforcement, border control and relations with the outside world are dispersed among a myriad of actors" (Toaldo 2015: 12).

"Migrants and refugees can often be held for several months, in deplorable conditions, before being allowed to move on" (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 14). The detention centres in which migrants and refugees are commonly held, are not all controlled by state forces anymore. Instead different militias and security forces have taken over the control. Those groups might be involved in ransom demands (ibid).

The key border crossings are now controlled by armed forces. These see an opportunity of making profit through the smuggling of migrants and refugees. This could mean a security threat as rivalries between the armed forces exist (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 17). In fact, a connection can be established between the Libyan conflict dynamics and the activities of human smuggling and trafficking (ibid 25):

> "Given the scale of the human smuggling business in Libya, there can be little doubt that migrants and refugees have become a commodity fuelling the war economy in the region and contributing to the centrifugal forces responsible for the enduring breakdown in law and order. Efforts to counter human smuggling and trafficking trade are at risk of falling victim to competing factional and regional interests at play in the Libyan conflict" (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 26).

This political development might cause deviations and fluctuations in the migration routes (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 15).

The closest entry point to Libya from the Horn of Africa is the Libyan border area in the South-East, through which most human smugglers make their 'clients' enter the country. The biggest centre in this area is Kufra, which is also a smuggling hub. However migrants have to suffer the consequences of the current conflict between two tribes – the Zuwayya and the Toubou –. This is the reason why a shift in routes has taken place: most migrants get smuggled over the border to make a quick stop in Tazerbu and then carry on their journey to Ajdabiya (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 15). Another alternative is a journey through the desert, crossing neither town nor village and thereby avoiding the police. In this case, the first Libyan town to be reached is Ajdabiya. The duration of this journey is of about one week time. But due to insufficient water

provisions, migrants and refugees risk to get dehydrated and die (ibid: 15; 16).,
Smugglers might avoid Kufra – in case the Egyptian border situation allows it –
by crossing the border to Egypt and going back again into Libya further up North
(ibid 16). Every route seems to lead to Ajdabiya, because it is a famous transit
hub, where migrants and refugees usually have to pay the smuggler fees in order
to be able to continue their journeys (ibid 15). Often refugees and migrants make
a pause in Libya on their way, in order to earn some money for their forthcoming
(ibid 13).

5.2.2 The Central Mediterranean route: From Libya to Europe

"Libya's geographic location makes it an ideal platform for refugees and migrants
to depart across the Mediterranean" (Wittenberg 2017: 8). In 2015 – according to
Frontex – 153,946 migrants and refugees crossed the Mediterranean via the
Central Mediterranean route. In 2016 181,126 migrants and refugees were
counted crossing the Central Mediterranean (Frontex, 2017). According to
UNHCR in 2014 about 36,000 Eritreans arrived in Italy and Malta by the Central
Mediterranean route. Whereas in 2015 more than 39,000 Eritrean refugees and
migrants came using this route, the number sank to about 20,000 arrivals in 2016
(Wittenberg 2017: 4).

5.2.2.1   The maritime journey

As mentioned above, migrants and refugees usually make a stop in the transit
hub Ajdabiya. From there the journey –organized by smugglers – continues to
the Northern coast of Libya (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security, Sector Program
2016: 28; Wittenberg 2017: 12). The coastal area geographically closest to
Lampedusa or Sicily is the area from where most of the maritime journeys depart.
De facto Frontex has estimated that about 90% of the boats arriving were
launched from said area (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Securits Sector Program,
2016, 4). The beachheads being the principle launching points are Al Qoms,
Garouboulis and Zuwara near Tripoli (ibid: 28). Since a variety of factors
influences the exact route migrants and refugees take, a certain flexibility is

therefore a must and departure points may vary according to the levels of control (Wittenberg 2017: 12).

If the weather and security conditions are deemed adequate enough by the smugglers, refugees and migrants go on board of the boats. Their sea crossing generally starts at night in order to avoid detection (Wittenberg, 2017, 12). The boats are almost always overcrowded and unsafe (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 13; Wittenberg 2017: 12). They further lack of safety equipment and fuel (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 13). The average duration of the journey varies between two and six days. In some cases the sea crossing takes longer, because the boat might drift (Wittenberg 2017: 12).

The hazardous journey on the Central Mediterranean route begins when the migrants and refugees leave the shores of Libya: recently more and more reports of rival gangs attacking each other's boats have been collected (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 28). The hazardousness of this part of the journey is further stressed by the number of refugees and migrants declared as dead or missing. In 2015 the total number of missing or dead refugees was estimated to be higher than 5,700 (GMDAC 2016: 4). More than 75% of them disappeared on the Central Mediterranean route. Around 3,770 are estimated to have gone missing by the sea. (ibid: 14).

5.2.2.2   *Arriving in Europe*

The main entry points to Europe for the migrants and refugees taking the Central Mediterranean route are Malta and Italy. The same as to the other countries along the route applies here: some consider those countries as destinations, whereas others perceive them as transit countries and wish to move onwards to reach destination countries such as Germany, the UK and Sweden (Wittenberg 2017: 12).

"Arrival trends in Malta and Italy are influenced by geopolitical and security shifts in the Mediterranean region" (Wittenberg 2017: 12). One example is the augmentation of arrivals that occurred after 2011, following the collapsing of the Tunisian and Libyan regimes. Another one is the increase of arrivals on Italian

shores compared to the decrease of arrivals on Maltese shores, developing due to several interconnected factors. One of these factors being the operation 'Mare Nostrum', initiated and paid by Italy, which rescued boats in distress and accompanied other vessels to the Italian shores in Sicily (ibid: ibid: 15).

As both of the states are signatory to the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees as well as the European Convention on Human Rights, they are legally bound to install a refugee reception system. The European Asylum System in the form of Dublin III has established common values plus a principle of solidarity, valid within the European Union, but only to a certain extent. The act of receiving and processing refugees and migrants is regulated by national laws and, in consequence, this results in differences among the member states (Wittenberg 2017: 12).

In Malta the Refugee law grants two different statuses: the refugee status and the subsidiary protection status. There is further the possibility to obtain temporary humanitarian protection (Wittenberg 2017: 12). At the beginning, the Maltese procedure of receiving migrants and refugees consisted in detaining all migrants illegally entering the country. The EU and the UNHCR made Malta adapt its law to their humanitarian principles. Now the mandatory and immediate detention for irregular arrivals has been stopped and instead a reception facility has been created (ibid 13).

In Italy the right to asylum is included in the constitution. As in Malta, the Italian law accords refugee status, subsidiary protection status and humanitarian protection. All three statuses entitle to a temporary permission to reside. Geographically seen, Italy is strategically located on the European mainland, which facilitates further movement to other EU member states. The island of Lampedusa is the part of Italian territory that is closest to Libya. Other Italian entry points for migrants and refugees are the islands of Sardinia and Sicily and also the mainland cities of Puglia and Calabria. In order to process the migrants that arrive on Lampedusa, Italian authorities transfer them to the mainland. (Wittenberg 2017: 13).

Whether the migrants and refugees entering Europe through the Central Mediterranean route stay in Malta or Italy or whether they move onwards to other European countries is dependent on a variety of internal and external factors.

5.2.3 'The European Response Mechanism'

Rising (state) security concerns in relation to flows of mixed migration induced policy changes concerning refugees (Wittenberg 2017: 7; Hyndman 2012: 246, 249). Wittenberg states, that „the unprecedented numbers of arrivals to European shores has […] highlighted the weaknesses of the EU's policies and operational responses to the migrant crisis" (ibid: 14). This is backed by Toaldo, according to whom the high figures of arrivals via the Mediterranean indicate the limited impact of the EU policies (Toaldo 205: 3). The effectivity of policies is mainly restrained by issues like the scarcity of a political will to share the responsibility of migration management, the almost non-existing solidarity between the member states of the EU as well as the situation that member states implement and enforce standards and laws of the EU in an insufficient and deficient manner (Wittenberg 2017: 14).

5.2.3.1   'Friendship Treaty 2008' – A bilateral agreement

 "Migration also conditioned relations between Libya and Europe, particularly Italy. A long string of agreements, culminating with the 2008 Friendship Treaty, outsourced to Libya the containment and push-back of migrants and asylum-seekers alike" (Toaldo 2015: 2). The effective implementation of this bilateral agreement established between the two countries was closely intertwined with the political situation in Libya. When Gaddafi was still ruling Libya, Italy had a clear interlocutor with whom it could implement the common containment policies of migration. After the collapse of the Gaddafi regime the conditions in Libya deteriorated and the government disintegrated. Hence no political actor was in charge of effectively pushing back migrants. As a result the policy collapsed too (ibid.: 3).

While the Gaddafi regime was in place, the outsourcing of the migration management was effective in so far, that it regulated the number of migrants and refugees crossing the Mediterranean. On the contrary the terrestrial borders of Libya – especially those in the South – continued to be permeable. This in turn represented an opportunity for the Libyan national economy. On the one hand irregular immigrants were used as low-paid workers and on the other hand their presence justified the existence of detention facilities as they were part of the policy implementation (Toaldo 2015: 6).

The bilateral treaty relied on three pillars: concerted sea patrols in the Mediterranean, the implementation of electronic border controls through Italian companies and the role of Italy as a mediator in discussions between EU and Libya concerning these particular issues (Toaldo 2015: 6-7).

Another relevant agreement in this context was that – signed on 6 May 2009 – in which Libya promised to take back the migrants Italy was actively pushing back. Italy assigned its navy to push back the boats with migrants in the high seas. During this procedure the navy did not determine, whether the boat was carrying refugees or economic migrants. This practice was heavily criticized, as it violated the principle of non-refoulement of the 1951 Convention. When the regime fell, this practice ended. Notably because the new economical dynamics made any illicit smuggling and trafficking business thrive (Toaldo 2015: 7).

Since the control over Libya is dispersed among several actors, a new attemptive of migration management outsourcing would be impossible (Toaldo 2015: 12).

In May 2015 the European Agenda on Migration released The European Agenda on Migration as a reposnse to the so-called 'crisis' (Wittenberg 2017: 14).

5.2.3.2 *'Temporary Emergency Relocation Scheme'*

This regulation temporarily abrogated the Dublin III regulation. The latter regulation determined the country of the first entry in Europe as responsible for the examination and processing of the asylum application. Through the

'Temporary Emergency Relocation Scheme' a new 'distribution key' has been introduced. It is composed of factors such as population size, gross domestic product and unemployment rate.

The planned relocation rate of 6,000 people per month was not met, which could indicate a lack of commitment (Wittenberg 2017: 14). It further reflects the limited power of the European Commission when its member-states are unwilling to implement policies and enforce laws (Wittenberg 2017: 15).

5.2.3.3   'Hotspot Approach'

The 'Hotspot Approach' is an approach aiming at establishing control at the ground level. A standard operating procedure has been adopted. in order to establish this control. This procedure in turn has four important steps. First of all the fingerprints of migrants and refugees should be taken. A second step: asylum seekers should quickly be selected and relocated. Further the installation of suitable reception facilities ist aimed at. And lastly, the people who were perceived as not needing international protection shall fastly be returned back to their country of origin. In order to realize the standard operating procedure ,European institutions and agencies such as Europol, Frontex and Eurojust were given out mandates. This approach was especially criticized in relation to the possibility that its implementation would deny people's rights.

5.2.3.4   'Rescue at sea operations'

In order to reach this goal Operation Triton – the successor of Operation Mare Nostrum – has been reinforced: its material resources were increased, the area of operation was expanded further and the budget was augmented (Wittenberg 2017: 15).

Operation Mare Nostrum, which was responsible for the search and rescue at sea and had a mandate to counter smuggling, was an Italian operation (Wittenberg 2017: 8-9). When Italy asked for financial support, only the European Commision gave them a relatively small sum (Wittenberg 2017: 15). The member-states of the EU on the other hand argued that Mare Nostrum was promoting safety at sea, which in turn was acting as a pull factor attracting more

and more migrants. Hence they did not fund it and the operation ceased. In December 2014 Operation Mare Nostrum was replaced by Operation Triton (Wittenberg 2017: 8-9, 15). The starting budget of Operation Triton has been estimated at €2.9 million per month. Originally the range of operational grounds was limited to 30 nautical miles from the Italian coast, meaning that it did not have a search mandate. Instead it was given a mandate for border enforcement. As it was sharply criticized and tragic accidents happened in the beginning of 2015, the EU responded by tripling the budget and extending the area of operation to 138 nautical miles southwards from the Sicilian shores. Nonetheless the critiques were not silenced. Other actors – private and non-state ones – launched their own operations of search and rescue (Wittenberg 2017: 15-16).

5.2.3.5   *'Countering human smuggling and trafficking'*

The EU regards this goal as one of the highest priorities. Other measures such as the EU Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling or the EU Action Plan on Return were further created to facilitate the implementation of this goal.

The central operation to reach the goal of inhibiting human trafficking and smuggling is Operation Sophia. It is a mission aiming at the disruption of smuggling routes. In order to disrupt the smuggling routes a three phase approach has been created. The first phase consisted in strategically gathering information about the networks of human smuggling and trafficking. The second phase was „the boarding, search, seizure, and diversion on the high seas of vessels used for human smuggling" (Wittenberg 2017: 16). The implementation of the first two phases in the internal and territorial Libyan water is phase three. Operation Sophia is currently active in phase three (ibid).

Next to having assisted with the arrests of several suspected smugglers and the neutralizing of over 200 vessels, Operation Sophia also saved lives (Wittenberg 2017: 17).

5.2.3.6   *'European Border and Coast Guard'*

This agency – when established – shall be a facilitator in developing and implementing border management strategy built on common EU standards as

well as be an assistant support for the member-states in the implementation process of those standards. It shall further be given an important role in the return of migrants by inaugurating a European Return Office (Wittenberg 2017: 17).

6   Conclusion

This thesis has treated the question "How are the geopolitical relations influencing the (push and pull) factors, the flows and the routes of forced migration illustrated with the case study of (forced) migration from Eritrea to Europe?".

In order to answer this question forced migration was explained as the movement characterized by a certain type of coercion. This coercion can either be man-made or induced by nature und must represent a threat to life or livelihood. The special case of refugees was further defined with the help of the 1951 Convention. Refugees are fleeing persecution because of religion, race, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group. In order to seek refuge a refugee must be outside of his country of origin.

As widely recognized, this is the case of Eritreans. They flee an authoritarian regime that is mainly characterized by a lifelong and abusive compulsory national service and human rights violations. Those human right violations occur systematically and comprise freedom of expression, freedom of religion, arbitrary arrests and detention under inhumane conditions as well as torture. Another push factor for Eritreans are the conflicting expectations from society, family as well as their own expectations. While the government expects Eritreans – no matter men or women – to do military service. This keeps Eritrean men in particular from fulfilling their societal obligations. These obligations are mostly related to financially supporting the family, which is not possible while being in the military service. As the Eritrean economy is in a poor shape and difficult to access, countries with liberal economies seem to attract Eritreans – especially young men. Through the communication with the diaspora compelling information like the high guarantee of being recognised as a refugee and the engaging entitlements pertaining to the refugee status are classified as pull factors.

A narrative that was initiated by national and transnational immigration control agencies tries to portray Eritreans as economic migrants. If this narrative would become dominant, it would in turn mean that Eritreans would no longer be able to obtain the refugee status. The outcomes of that would be dramatic. In the esprit of critical geopolitics one should at least question the interests involved in this

discourse: Why exactly do these immigration control agencies want to classify Eritreans as economic migrants?

Critical geopolitics mainly argue that knowledge is never value-free and neutral and thus it is power. Geopolitical knowledge is therefore always embedded in power relations. In this line of argument, my interests in writing this particular thesis and choosing the sources I chose are questionable as well.

Eritreans when migrating to Europe either directly cross the border to Sudan or alternatively traverse Ethiopia before entering Sudan. From Sudan they usually move on to Libya. After reaching the Northern Libyan shores they take a boat to cross the Central Mediterranean with the aim of reaching Italy or Malta. Along this journey they pass through different 'smuggle hubs', from where the next part of the journey is coordinated. But migration routes never are the exact same. Instead they might vary tremendously according to migration policies, border controls as well as political, social, environmental and economic conditions in the country of origin, transit and destination. The adaptability of the smugglers to changes also influences the migratory movement.

In the concrete case of Eritreans several factors of different nature are encountered. In Sudan the threat of being kidnapped and sold for ransom has risen in the last year, which is why Eritreans try to avoid the South-Eastern border area of Sudan. In Libya the collapsed regime led to a patchwork of militias controlling different parts of the country. The illicit economy of smuggling – including the smuggling of humans – is quite a big economical sector in Libya. Its strategic location theoretically makes Libya an interesting partner for border externalization practices of the European Union.

As a matter of fact the practice of externalizing borders is best illustrated by the attempts of destination countries to manage the migration flows closer to their sources, as far away as possible from the own territory. The practice of outsourcing migration management is often apparent in bilateral deals and readmission agreements. The 'Friendship treaty 2008' is a poignant example of how geopolitical interests determine the border management, since the Italian and the Libyan government have had parts of their own interests met when striking the deal. The interest of Italy in striking a deal with Libya are first and

foremost explainable by its strategic geographical location. It was easy for the Italian navy to push back the boats with refugees and/or migrants to a country that welcomed them back. Libya on the other hand profited from the deal in terms of having low-payed, irregular work migrants sustaining its economy in several ways. The agreement though came to a sudden end when the Gaddafi regime collapsed.

When the regime of Gaddafi fell and civil war broke out in Libya many Eritreans – as well as other migrants and refugees – fled Libya and continued their journey to Europe which is reflected in the sudden rise of refugee arrivals. At that time these arrivals were attributed to the alleged pull factor of Mare Nostrum. European member states argued that the Operation Mare Nostrum was acting as a pull factor for migrants since it transmitted the message of safety at sea. It is again questionable in whose interest this narrative was presented. This exact narrative is a geopolitical discourse in itself. One could suggest that it was created for the sole purpose of adapting the policies to the interests of the EU member states.

Naturally the increased number of arrivals in 2014 and 2015 led to a narrative of crisis and chaos which in turn initiated the creation and implementation of a response mechanism by the EU. Of these practices the 'Hotspot Approach' exemplifies the intersection of geopolitics and biopolitics in border management practices. The biometric management of foreigners to be realized as one of the first steps in this approach is the fingerprinting of the arriving migrants and refugees.

Further the mandate to board, search, seize and divert vessels in the high seas which was attributed to Operation Sophia represents in itself the attempt to intercept migration closer to its source. In addition, by training the Libyan coastguard this operation again demonstrates how the European Union is expanding its sovereign reach in an attempt to control migration and human smuggling.

Rather than trying to control migration by force, long-term policies that address the sources of migration and refugee flows as well as the situations in transit countries should be established. Moreover by creating legal ways to migrate to

other countries, the fatality of migrant journeys would decrease and costly operations like the rescue at sea operations would hopefully no longer be needed. Implementing such sustainable policies naturally take time and during the implementation period the emergency responses that were established should stay in place. While elaborating the more sustainable, long-term solutions every actor that is affected by the current migratory flows, should take part in the process of creation and implementation.

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8   Table of Abbreviations

EU   European Union

GMDAC   Global Migration Data Analysis Centre

IDP   Internally Displaced Person

IOM   International Organization of Migration

UN   United Nations

UNHCR   United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNRWA   United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

9   Table of Figures

Figure 1   The East Africa route and the Central Mediterranean route. (Sahan Foundation; IGAD Security Sector Program 2016: 10; Google Maps 2017)

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11   Confirmation of Authorship

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