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Catching up with the Restless West

A discourse analysis of the Eurocentric biases in the Marshall
Plan with Africa

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Abstract

Following a time period where a large number of refugees and immigrants had been received by Germany, the German minister of development proposed a new framework for Africa policy in the beginning of 2017 targeting the root causes of poverty and large migration flows. Titled *Marshall Plan with Africa*, the project aims to establish a new partnership between the continents, highlighting private investment, ratification of international trade agreements and 20 million new job- and vocational training opportunities for young people among other solutions. Yet, it is claimed to promote African solutions for African problems. This research looks at the Eurocentric discourse in the official policy document, guided by the research question *does the Marshall Plan with Africa contain Eurocentric features?*. It uses a customised framework for analysis building upon established methods of policy analysis, tying in theories of poststructuralism, eurocentrism and political myths. The study finds that although the policy document has a clear bias of Eurocentric institutionalism and Western values, it also contains components reflecting a more inclusive approach to development and agency.

Key words: Marshall Plan with Africa, eurocentrism, discourse analysis, development, foreign policy

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1 Introduction

There can be no understanding of development policies without a description of who the underdeveloped are, where they differ from the developed West, and how they can transform their identity.

(Lene Hansen 2006: xvi)

In the wake of the high number of refugees and immigrants received by Germany in the last years, the German minister of development Dr. Gerd Müller proposed a new framework for Africa policy with the ambition to target root causes of poverty and large migration flows (Grefe & Köckritz 2017).

The project was originally named *Marshallplan für Afrika*, an allusion to the extensive American foreign aid program received by Europe after the Second World War, but was revised slightly by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) shortly before it was published in the beginning of 2017 (ibid.). The published document, *Marshall Plan with Africa*, covers guidelines for a renewed economic partnership between Africa and Europe to diversify African economies in order to stimulate growth and create job opportunities (BMZ 2017a). It is in the core values of the framework that it builds upon African solutions to African problems, explaining the name change but raises a central question – *does it?*

At the same time this new framework was announced, Germany held the G20 presidency and pushed an Africa focused agenda, presenting the Marshall Plan with Africa under the name Compact with Africa. During 2017, there was also an EU-Africa summit held in the Ivory Coast set to address common interests and challenges, where the idea was presented and discussed between representatives from both continents (Wesel 2017).

The project, still a blueprint and not passed policy, has been subject to both praise and criticism, many questioning the underlying motives and possibility to pursue the extensive plan (Pelz 2017). China's recent advances has without doubt stirred up uneasiness among Western countries, risking a decline in Western influence on the African continent (Poplak 2016).

1.1 Purpose and Research Question

As laid out above, the name of the policy document is a reference to the recovery plan post war Europe received from the U.S. after the Second World War; the matter arose in German politics after receiving a large number of refugees from North African and Middle Eastern countries; and it is a proposed partnership

aimed at boosting African economies based on Western capitalist measurements of development. These factors suggest that the policy blueprint would be based on Eurocentric values, nevertheless seeing as the country proposing it is European. The policy document does however claim to be based on African solutions to African problems, displaying a puzzle which makes the Marshall Plan with Africa an interesting foreign policy blueprint to examine closer.

The purpose of this research is thus first and foremost to find out if the policy proposal does in fact build upon African solutions, or if it is biased by Eurocentrism. The research will be carried out by analysing the discourse in the Marshall Plan with Africa using a customised framework of poststructuralism, eurocentrism and political myth theories combined with an adapted method for policy analysis. Starting from a poststructural theoretical outset, this is of highest importance as language and discourse is viewed as constructing and reconstructing worldviews, knowledge and social hierarchies. Seeing as the project is ongoing, this research also aspires to lay the groundwork for a future policy revision recommendation on the matter.

The research question guiding the analysis reads as follows:

Does the Marshall Plan with Africa contain Eurocentric features?

1.2 Background

In order to situate the Marshall Plan with Africa in its political context, the paper will start off with a brief overview of recent German Africa policy leading up to the official blueprint published 2017 before presenting the theory, method and material used to analyse the content of the document.

The BMZ started working on a specific approach to the African continent in 2004 in order to improve the effects of German development cooperation with African countries (GIZ 2018). In the last few years, three framework reports from the BMZ has been published regarding the country's new Africa policy.

The framework report from 2014 acknowledges Africa as the priority continent for the BMZ and cover themes such as political stability, crisis and conflict, economic cooperation, vocational training, health, agriculture and private investment (BMZ 2014). The one from 2015 looks at the progress of the 2014 document after one year, specifically at migration, youth employment, health, agriculture and partnership possibilities (BMZ 2015). Finally, the report published the year before the Marshall Plan with Africa blueprint focuses on crisis in the AU, strengthening economic development in North Africa, youth employment and vocational training, renewable energy and cooperation between BMZ and the German private sector (BMZ 2016). There is a clear trend among the themes, which are then reflected in the Marshall Plan document, along the lines of poststructural theory of policy as a social, discursively interlinked field which will be presented in more detail in the coming chapters.

As presented in the introduction, the plan was presented at a geopolitical time of political instability in Europe largely due to the large number of refugees and migrants arriving in Europe. For Germany, who had taken in a large number of refugees fleeing the war in Syria, the youth unemployment and large number of displaced groups in Africa became an extra incentive to formulate a solution to hamper the migration streams (Reuters 2016).

The Marshall Plan is a living product which have been subject to commentary from academia, politics, business sector, religious groups and people and organisations with connections to German development initiatives among others (BMZ 2018). Out of the selection of these available on the ministry's website, not one is from an African academic, politician or organisation. The lack of the other perspective in the constructive comments for an intercontinental partnership is not defended or justified by the BMZ, presenting the reader with the assumption that it was not thought about or at least not considered an issue. However, other sources show African leaders' approval of the plan, although neglecting critical voices of the civil society medial space to express their views (Schwikowski 2017).

2 Theoretical Framework

In this section, I will go over the main theories used to analyse the text and provide an overview of the current research on the topic of this paper. The chosen theories, *poststructuralism*, *eurocentrism* and *political myth*, are chosen based on their potential to highlight different structural messages of the text. They are based on similar, if not the same, ontological and epistemological assumptions, making them compliable. In the next chapter, **3 Method**, I will elaborate more on how they are combined to construct a chart for analysis.

2.1 Previous Research

Discourse analysis and poststructuralism as a research field are relatively new in comparison to classic IR schools such as realism, but it has nevertheless become an established genre in modern IR theorising. Well known authors apart from the ones used in this research include Foucault, Laclau & Mouffe and Derrida (Hansen 2006: xvi-xvii, 2-3).

Analysis of the discourse in foreign aid has previously been conducted in the academic sphere. Whereas a lot of attention has been aimed at scrutinising the foreign policy discourse of the U.S. and other Anglo-Saxon countries in relation to their respective foreign aid recipients (see e.g. Regilme 2018; Grant & Nijman 1997; Cawley 2015; and Mawdsley 2017), other regions and political units have been subject to analysis as well (see e.g. Hook & Zhang 1998, Burghart 2017, and Kim 2016 for East-Asia; and Büthe, Major & Swoza 2012 for aid in the private sector). Research regarding Germany's foreign aid has previously examined the geo-strategic motives behind the aid (Dreher, Nunnenkamp & Schmaljohann 2015), as well as looked at Germany's Africa Policy and how their national identity is created in contrast to Africa (Engel 2012).

Regarding the subject of choice in this research, the Marshall Plan with Africa, very few academic contributions have been published about the current document seeing as it was announced only in the beginning of last year, 2017 (see e.g. Schmiege 2017 for comments on the plan). However, the very idea of a new Marshall Plan in the 21st century has been scrutinised and debated in the academic sphere for over a decade, presented in short in the next paragraph. But *how*, *when* and most notably *if* a renewal of such an extensive foreign aid plan is to be enacted has remained contested.

Paul Collier, among others, has argued that the developmental constraints Africa has been facing are mainly political and that foreign investment thus should be paired with domestic reform (Collier & Dollar 2000). Other claim that

massive flows of foreign aid to Africa are, because of the poor results in the 1980's and intricate ties to different donors with commercial interests, a waste of money (see e.g. Dowden 2005). Finally, some acknowledges that aid historically has had a positive impact on African countries, but that political change is needed and must come from within the countries themselves with only limited outside support (see e.g. Lockwood 2005). The idea of a new Marshall Plan has also been presented with other regions in mind (see e.g. Smith 2011 for The Middle East).

To the extent of my knowledge, a profound discourse analysis with the current document in focus has not yet been published, and it is this gap in the research this paper aims to fill.

2.2 Poststructuralism, Identity and Foreign Policy

This study sets out from a poststructuralist worldview, placing identity, foreign policy and discourses at the centre of attention. In contrast to structuralism, poststructuralism does not view structures as fixed and consistent. Rather, the position implies that language and communication ascribe meaning to objects and circumstances, which in turn constantly shapes and reshapes our understanding of our surroundings. With this reasoning, language construct, reconstruct and reflect power relations and is thus inherently political (Hansen 2006: 1, 17; Jørgenssen & Phillips 2002: 8-12). One of the most recognised poststructuralism scholars in foreign policy and identity research is Lene Hansen, whose academic contributions will be used as theoretical foundation for this research.

Poststructuralism falls under the broader field of social constructivism which recognises four key premises. First, knowledge is not and should not be regarded and treated as an objective truth. The world is only accessible to us through categorical representations delivered by language, which will here be referred to as products of discourse. Second, our understandings of the world are a product of our historical and cultural discourses, meaning that our knowledge could have been different had we been subject to different discourses. Third, building on the second point, the knowledge we have about the world and how we regard it is created and managed by social processes which in turn create and maintain social hierarchies. Finally, the fourth key principle in social constructivism points out the way discourse allow some actions whilst prohibit other, which gives the social construction of knowledge, truth and power real social effects (Jørgenssen & Phillips 2002: 5-6).

The definitions of discourse used in this paper are amongst the most common in the poststructural school and reads as follows from a higher level of abstraction to a lower: "language use as a social practice"; the "kind of language used within a specific field" for a less abstract definition, referring to political discourse for example; and finally "a way of speaking which gives meaning to experiences from a particular perspective" (Jørgenssen & Phillips 2002: 66-7). Viewing discourse as a social act thus has it play a part in how we conceive knowledge (ibid.: 5). Language is defined here according to Fairclough's three-dimensional

model as a communicative event with three parts: a text, which can be a text as such but also a speech or image; the discursive practice involving the production and consumption of the text(s) in question; and finally the social practice produced when the discursive mechanism works in combination with other mechanisms (ibid.: 68, 71).

Viewing language as social, the school of thought sees how it is a collective matter of connecting certain sounds to particular objects, functions and feelings. It is simultaneously political, as it is an arena for the production and reproduction of certain subjectivities and identities whilst at the same time excluding other, making the portrayal and allotted space of different experiences in history and policy narratives critical. Language could also be understood as a series of juxtapositions, where all things are constantly valued in relation to something else (Hansen 2006: 18-19). Identities are no exception from this relational valuing.

Poststructuralism views identity as discursive, relational and social, meaning that identity is constructed through language, in relation to an Other and established through collectively expressed and understood codes. Identity is also perceived as political, separating it from anthropological understandings of identity as culture (Hansen 2006: 6). Identities are not necessarily exclusively positive or negative; two identities can have essential societal roles according to dominant norm discourses but simultaneously be described as the antithesis to the other (ibid.: 21). The process of constructing identity by enhancing own characteristics in relation to an Other is called linking and differentiating. Linking means that particular characteristics and events are positively or directly linked to an object, whereas differentiating portrays how each characteristic is simultaneously negatively linked to the opposite characteristic of the Other (ibid.: 19-21).

Applying these assumptions to foreign policy, it becomes evident how poststructuralism, in contrast to for example constructivism or liberalism, view state identity as dependant on discursive practices exercised in foreign policy and sees how foreign policy discourse always presents a Self in relation to one or more Others when constructing problems¹, objects and subjects (ibid.: 1, 6, 21-24). The discursive practices are in turn dependant on previous policy. The policy discourse is also social, as it aims to convince an audience of both the political opposition and the public of the legitimacy of the problems and solutions, and thus institutionalise the identity representations in question (ibid.: 1). It is in foreign policy discourse that the linking between (ethical) state identity and policy can be studied (ibid.: 51).

Finally, foreign policy is not situated in a vacuum. Rather, it is part of an intertextual web of knowledge and representations where it both builds upon the problem and identity framings of previous policy and public understandings as well as acts as the foundation of prior knowledge for future policy (ibid.: 7, 56-7).

¹ A further elaboration on problem constructions in foreign policy is presented in section **3.1.1 What's the problem represented to be?**

It is in this context my research takes off, viewing the political proposal of the Marshall Plan with Africa as a link in an intertextual, interdiscursive chain, where it draws on expressions and understandings used in previous texts in this particular political field. These previous texts has in turn both been influenced and influenced political events, making the text in question a sum of the discursive practices and development in that field. These previous discourses are then assumed to have affected the representations of the Self and the Other and the problem in the document (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 73-4; Hansen 2006: 56-7).

2.3 Eurocentrism & Development

With the poststructural assumptions in mind, this next section will regard eurocentrism which will be a central theme in the study of problem representations and identities in the Marshall Plan with Africa.

Defined by Silvia Rodríguez Maeso and Marta Araújo as

(...) a paradigm for interpreting a (past, present and future) reality that uncritically establishes the idea of European and Western historical *progress/achievement* and its political and ethical *superiority*, based on scientific rationality and the construction of the rule of law (Rodríguez Maeso & Araújo 2015: 1).

eurocentrism is highlighted as a product of favouring Western achievements historically, as well as affecting the way we consider international relations both today and in the future. The definition of eurocentrism that will be used in this study is the notion of viewing Europe and the West at large as advanced and placed at the centre of one's worldview whereas the achievements of rest of the world are actively downplayed (Kerner 2018: 552). In other words, finding something to be Eurocentric does not necessarily mean that it is bad, or in the case of foreign aid harmful or unwanted. It does however by definition mean that it is centred on one way of looking at development and neglecting the possibility that other ways might be more successful.

The historic aspect of the concept plays a central role as it

(...) signifies that Europe and European values became a foundational source of meaning through which individuals, groups, and nations from the continent could develop attitudes based on emerging ideologies of racial, religious, cultural, or ethnic supremacy over the various indigenous peoples that they encountered during the period from about 1450 (Lowy 1995: 714-5).

In development policy and international cooperation, this assumes that since the West has had the power to define values and progress, it continuously centres itself ahead of the non-West in development terms (Sardar 1999: 44). Continued, eurocentrism is generally understood to rest on seven main principles in history narratives spilling over on development policy (Mazrui 2009: xi; Sardar 1999:

45ff). First, there is a bias of euro-heroism, meaning that Western inventions and achievements receive disproportional attention in contrast to the creations rest of the world. Following this is euro-mitigation, the habit of covering up or downplaying the crimes committed by Europeans or Westerners throughout history. Third, euro-exclusivity, means that history books tend to focus on the Western view of history, neglecting the experiences by others (Mazrui 2009: xi-xii).

The fourth pillar is based on how eurocentrism affects other cultures, namely how it effectively downplays achievements of other cultures. Fifth, the Eurocentric trend also takes it a step further from downplaying the achievements of other people and cultures than the Westerns by also exaggerating their faults and sins. The sixth Eurocentric bias marks the other side of the third, highlighting the very limited space allotted cultures beside the Western in history narratives. Finally, the seventh bias takes place within the study of other cultures, by for example dividing historical epochs after European standards (ibid.: xiii-xvi).

Following the poststructural understanding of how language recreates power structures, these Eurocentric themes in history narratives has and will continuously spill over on policy making and thus recreate Western development as the norm. Based on this theory, the very notion of development would be an instrument for the West to make sure that the future of the ‘non-developed’ world would be the present of the West (Sardar 1999: 46-47). To provide the tools to better analyse the Marshall Plan with Africa in order to examine whether it holds Eurocentric biases, the next part will look into different categories of eurocentrism.

Eurocentrism in the study of political science and humanities came to receive public attention with the publication of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* from 1978, in which he, among other things, criticises the overwhelming emphasis on Western experiences in history and Othering of non-western experiences (Said 2003). In this study, however, a more defined way to approach eurocentrism will be used to complement the seven pillars and help create an analytical framework.

In his book *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics* (2012), John M. Hobson too identifies several Eurocentric myths, but angled in a way that aligns with the poststructural theoretical view presented in the previous section. In his text, Hobson presents the field of IR as both “defender and promoter of Western civilization” (2012: 14) and elaborates how the discipline helps entrench the Eurocentric worldview in the study of international politics. Some striking arguments are that the very field builds theories mainly on historical events in Europe but claimed to be founded on a positivistic and value-free base; how the debates within the field are portrayed as ‘great’ when in reality they stem from the same Eurocentric narratives; most theories use nation-states as the primary entities, discursively cementing their central role; globalisation has been politically constructed in different ways, one trend among scholars being the opportunity to remake the world along Western lines; and finally the tendency to ahistorically trace major IR schools back several centuries, ascribing them legitimacy through consistency (Hobson 2012: 14ff).

When engaging in the study of eurocentrism, the assumption is often that IR will be studied solely from an imperialist view. Hobson tries to stray away from that assumption by taking Said's analysis of orientalism and Othering a step further and identifies four different categories within eurocentrism, illustrated with the four-way matrix below.

Table 1.2 *The four variants of generic Eurocentrism in international theory*

	Pro-imperialist	Anti-imperialist
Eurocentric institutionalism	(A) Paternalist	(B) Anti-paternalist
Scientific racism	(C) Offensive	(D) Defensive

(Hobson 2012: 5)

First, the different ways eurocentrism takes place throughout history and between distinguished scholars are divided into Eurocentric institutionalism and scientific racism. The first is based on understandings of the world and world order from institutional and cultural factors rather than biological. Scholars and historians which fall under this categorisation of eurocentrism view all people and societies as capable of reason and progression from "savagery" into "civilisation" (Hobson 2012: 3-5). Whether this could, and should, be done with the aid of the more civilised West, acts as the deciding principle for the second sub categorisation, pro- contra anti-imperialist. A Eurocentric institutionalist with a pro-imperialist viewpoint would in this theory be labelled paternalist, characterised by the philosophy that it is the duty of the developed West to assist less developed societies on the path to modernity by delivering European institutions to accelerate the development (ibid.: 6). Regardless of division, the common denominator for Eurocentric institutionalism, in Hobson's experience, is that development is linear and the civilisation standard of the West is higher than that of the non-western world, making the Western level of development regarded as the norm which ought to be achieved (ibid.).

Paired with an anti-imperialist opinion, the Eurocentric institutionalist would instead be labelled anti-paternalist, highlighting the auto-developmental characteristics of all societies, and therefore the lack of need for a Western intervention. In this view, the West has pioneered development towards civilisation because of phenomenal institutional capabilities, but all societies will naturally follow this path at some point in history (ibid.).

Scientific racism, on the other hand, enhances genetics and biology as determining factors to if and which societies can reach a civilisation of modern, Western, standard. As Hobson notes, this field is much more heterogeneous than that of Eurocentric institutionalism (ibid.: 6-7).

In international politics, the very idea and measurements of development can be traced to a Eurocentric ideal of Western capitalism. Taking the example of

economic growth which is a common way to measure development, it rests on the capitalist ideal of profit through capitalisation of labour and resources. This model is often criticised for in itself being environmentally unsustainable as it encourages accumulation of capital and thus the exploitation of natural resources (Mehmet 1995). As outlined in Hobson's analysis of eurocentrism, the Western societal model based on capitalism is seen as superior in Eurocentric narratives. The strive to implement Western norms and institutions in the rest of the world is sometimes referred to as *westernisation* (see e.g. Mehmet 1999).

2.3.1 Myth of Europe

The third theory used in this research as aid to analyse the Marshall plan with Africa is very much connected to eurocentrism, namely political myth and more specifically the Myth of Europe. This is to highlight how the policy authors, from West, portray Europe in relation to other geographic or political divisions of the Earth and how that affects the intended partnership.

A myth in the study of IR is the process around a particular narrative which simplifies the understandings of the subjects' surroundings by creating dichotomies between Us and Them. Whereas myths are narratives, not all narratives are myths. A myth requires certain reception and significance, and it is the process of production, reception and reproduction that creates the process which is the work on and of myth (Bottici & Challand 2010: 90-1). A political myth resonates with political conditions and affects different social groups by reproducing significance shared by the group in question and address the political circumstances in which the group exists. Rather than attempting to describe the world, political myths oftentimes construct a new one, and invite the subjects to take action. This can often make myths self-fulfilling prophecies (ibid.: 92).

Common political myths of Europe stem from the ancient Greek mythology of the heroine Europa, tied in with historical narratives of the superior intellectual heritage from the classical times (ibis. 102-4). Some specific European identities recognised in these myths are among others the "(...) myth of Europe as a vehicle for peace and prosperity (...)" (ibid.: 3) and Europe as "(...) the promised land of wellbeing and modernity (...)", often symbolised by a train both in images and metaphors in political speeches (ibid.: 107).

3 Method

The main methods used in this research are discourse analysis and policy analysis, narrowed down to a framework for analysis based on the writings of Lene Hansen, Carol Bacchi and discourse methodology scholars. Discourse analysis is first presented in broader terms, followed by an even more concrete approach to policy analysis in particular before rounding up to a chart for analysis combining the theories and methods presented.

3.1 Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is based on the poststructural understanding of language as an active agent in shaping our understandings of the world as described in section **2.1 Poststructuralism, Identity and Foreign Policy**, making it both a method and a theory in itself. As a method in political science, discourse analysis is a way of analysing and displaying discursive patterns and varieties in language (Jørgenssen & Phillips 2002: 1). The preferred way of performing the analysis itself differs between poststructural scholars. The way used here, presented in the next two sections, follows the critical discourse analysis school by investigating power relationships constructed through discourses in order to present material on which critique and proposal for social change can be formed (ibid.: 2).

Viewing discourse as not only a form of practice to shape and reshape structures but also as an active reflection of the current structures thus reveals the existing structures and assumptions the policy writers of Marshall Plan with Africa base their policy suggestion on (ibid: 61).

3.1.1 What's the problem represented to be?

The very founding assumption policy making is based on is that there are problems in need of solving and that policy thus serves as the fixing mechanism. Policy makers, in turn, become the fixers, solving the issue and bringing about change. From a poststructural point of view, this puts a lot of pressure on the policy makers' understanding of the problem and their knowledge of the field, as well as the representations available in previous policy. This shows how 'problems' are *endogenous*, created within the policy making process, rather than *exogenous* and existing autonomously in society as often assumed in policy analysis. In other words, following this line of reasoning, we are governed by problematisations which need to be scrutinised.

The goal of using Carol Bacchi's method of analysing policy, "What's the problem represented to be", is thus to problematise the problematisations in policies by asking interrogative questions to the text and the findings (Bacchi 2009: ix-xvi). Her six-step method is created to highlight both the problem, its background and context, and its effects. The questions posed by Bacchi reads as follows:

1. "What's the 'problem' (...) represented to be in a specific policy?"
2. What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the 'problem'?"
3. How has this representation of the problem come about?"
4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' be thought about differently?"
5. What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?"
6. How/where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted and replaced?"

(Bacchi 2009: p. xii)

In this research, I am interested in uncovering Eurocentric biases in the policy document in question by looking at problem representations, identity constructions and the potential silences in and effects of these findings. In order to do so, I have created a customised framework for analysis to approach the policy in question, based on some, but not all of Bacchi's questions. The relevant questions for my research are one, two, four and five, presented in more detail below. An elaboration on how these chosen questions from Bacchi are then paired with theory to create an analytical framework is available in the next section.

Question one sets of the analysis by clarifying the problem formulation posed by the policy maker(s). Starting backwards in a way, the solution can help clarify what 'problem' the policy has aimed to solve (ibid.: 2-4).

Once the dominant problem representations are identified, *question two* aims to investigate and illuminate what logics, worldview and contextual understandings underpins them. Here a lot of identity construction from poststructural theory is tied in, as for example the construction and understanding of an Other through linking and differentiation (ibid.: 4-8).

The goal of question three is to clarify competing problem representations by considering the social context an political opposition, and as the purpose of the research is to focus on the Eurocentric features of only the Marshall Plan with Africa, it is left out from the analysis in order to leave room for deeper analysis on the, for this study, more relevant questions.

Having presented the problem representation(s) and the logics and worldview on which it rests, *question four* encourages to look at what is left out. In other words, its objective is to problematise what is not problematised. A good starting point here is to look at the dichotomous identity representations and problem representation context from question two, and seeing what may be oversimplified (ibid.: 12-14). Here, as further presented in the next chapter, theories of

eurocentrism will help remind of perspectives from other cultures which may illuminate culturally fixed ways of thinking about institutions and values.

Finally, *question five* evaluates the effects of these problem representation(s), identifying potential winners and losers, benefits and harms in order to facilitate critical assessment of the policy. It appraises what is likely to change or stay the same. The question is divided in three interlinked kinds of effects:

1. “Discursive effects: effects which follow from the limits imposed on what can be thought and said;
2. Subjectification (or ‘subjectivisation’) effects: the way in which subjects and subjectivities are constituted in discourse;
3. Lived effects: The impact on life and death.” (ibid.: 15).

3.2 Framework for Analysis

By combining the theories with discourse analysis narrowed down to the chosen parts of Bacchi’s method mentioned above, this section presents a customised framework for analysis which will guide the analysis, and thus aid the reader in reviewing its credibility, in the next chapter. The framework is divided into two sections, the first scrutinising the discourse in the document and the second reviewing the findings of the first section. To spare the reader from excessive jumping back and forth between my analysis and the document, the analysis in section one is presented from the top to the bottom of the document, guiding the reader through the structure and main content of the document by commenting on it briefly. Potential repetitions will however be disregarded unless the context provides different meanings to the statements.

The *first section* will look at the problem representation in accordance with Bacchi’s method, tying in question one and two by examining the problem representation based on Eurocentric theory of foreign politics and the political myths of Europe. Hobson’s four-way matrix of dividing eurocentrism, if applicable, will be used to map the assumptions creating the problem representation. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this section will also clarify some identity assumptions based on poststructural identity theory of self and othering. Specific features I will look for in the text to illuminate this is thus how linking and differentiating is performed with Europe and Africa in mind, as well as the geopolitical origin of the ideas presented.

Regarding the problem representation I will look at what the goals with the partnership or foreign aid plan is and move backwards from there to uncover the circumstantial understandings of issues in need of solving. In the goal formulations I will look specifically at how the policy writers portray the developmental expectations for both Europe and Africa in order to examine how development and the respective institutions are viewed and valued, based on Eurocentric theory. Both findings that point out Eurocentric as well as non-

Eurocentric views will be presented throughout the analysis to present the whole, nuanced picture.

The *second section* then looks at the results from section one and aims to identify the silences, using elements from Bacchi's question four and five. Here, a deeper analysis of what is left out of this problematisation is presented premised on the critique of Eurocentric development ideals and how language and foreign policy are based off previous policy and understandings of problems. I will pay extra attention to agency and how the historic relations between the continents are portrayed and approached, if they are commented on at all.

The section will end analysing the discursive and subjectification effects of the problem formulations, using the two first questions under question five in Bacchi's method.

3.3 Material

Primary material will be the official policy blueprint for the partnership, Marshall Plan with Africa. Even though it is in its starting phase, the document is deemed to be sufficient as it in itself proclaims to identify both problems, solutions and cooperation potential, making it ideal for this type of research (BMZ 2017: 4). As this research aims to examine whether there are Eurocentric features in problem representation and solution suggestions or not, the project being in its starting phase is viewed as a pro rather than a con as it makes the findings potentially useful for policy makers to consider. Additional documents, such as the Compact with Africa, are excluded as it consists only of two pages with the same main content as the Marshall Plan with Africa.

The English versions of the originally German documents are used as to avoid unnecessary translation errors in direct quotes. As the English version is published on BMZ's official website as well, it is in this research deemed just as qualified. However, the language and phrasings between the documents have been compared, should there be any linguistic particularities.

Secondary material will be political documents leading up to the Marshall Plan blueprint published in 2017 as well as published commentary and political statements regarding it to display the context and highlight certain points. The framework policy documents presented in the introduction from 2014, 2015 and 2016 are the only published framework documents for Africa policy available on the BMZ website and were thus presented to create an image of the previous policy. Finally, academic articles and books focused on either theory, method or the case in question are used throughout the research. These are chosen based primarily on their relevance to the subject, but consideration has been put to their recency as well as compatibility to assure a close knitted framework for analysis. Criticism to the theories have been left out of this paper as it is beyond the scope of this research to engage in an epistemological and ontological debated. Criticism has nevertheless been considered, and the interested can find critique of poststructuralism in e.g. Culler 1987 and defence of it in e.g. Wenman 2017 and

Balarin 2008. For an even more nuanced revision of the theory, the interested can consider the 1971 debate between Chomsky and Foucault (Elders 2011).

4 Analysis

The analysis presented below is divided into two sections as presented in chapter **3.2 Framework for Analysis**. The first looks at problem representations and solutions in the text, following the document from start to bottom. The second section then turns to analyse the silences in the document as well as discuss some potential effects from the problem representations and solutions presented, based on the theoretical framework.

4.1 Problem Representations and Solutions

The policy document is divided into five chapters and an introduction, each with specific problem representations, solutions and arguments for a closer partnership. Here, each chapter will be analysed according to the framework for analysis, identifying problem representations and solutions as well as identity representations.

The introduction presents the reader with a brief background to the relationship between the continents and their mutual potential gains from an outlined partnership, but also the risks of not engaging in closer cooperation. It highlights the nature of the document, that it is a living product based on the need for new solutions to the new challenges that Africa is facing, inviting everyone to take part in shaping the new partnership agreement between the continents (BMZ 2017a: 4).

Here, the problems are not yet specifically outlined. However, one can already hint at identity construction through linking and differentiating. In the very first paragraph of the document, the joint responsibility for the challenges *facing Africa* is stressed, as those will affect Europe as well.

How successfully we manage the major challenges that lie ahead will decide not only the future and the fate of Africa – both its people and its natural environment – but also the future of Europe (BMZ 2017a: 4).

There is no recognition of the opposite relationship, that Europe is facing challenges which may inflict negatively on Africa, and thus benefit from a partnership as well (ibid.). This directly links Africa to challenges, and Europe to the reliever of those.

The third paragraph then connects this policy proposal to the original Marshall Plan, identifying that the challenges are not entirely comparable, but that Africa is

nevertheless in need of the same effort that helped Europe out of their misery after the Second World War. This adds to the identity construction reflected on in the last paragraph, seeing how Europe is now beyond crisis whereas Africa is discursively placed in the developmental situation Europe was in almost 70 years ago. Tying in theories of eurocentrism in political narratives, this presents a Eurocentric view of development as linear, with the West as frontrunners. Using Hobson's chart, this would so far suggest a *Eurocentric paternalist* approach.

Despite this, there is nevertheless strong highlight on how the partnership must be an integrated effort with focus on African solutions to African problems, particularly supporting the commitments of the African Union's (AU) "Agenda 2063" which actively gives agency to the AU and instead removes paternal features (ibid.). This is further acknowledged by inviting a discussion about the plan, which was commented on in the introduction of this paper.

The two pages before the first chapter of the document are devoted to the ten starting points (*10 Thesen*) of the proposal, circling the main focus areas. The first starting point acknowledges the need for a new agreement between Europe and Africa, focusing however only on problems on Africa's continent.

Africa's population is set to double by 2050. It will then be home to 20 per cent of all people in the world. Ensuring that hundreds of millions of young Africans have enough food, energy and jobs and that their natural resources are protected presents massive challenges but also opportunities (BMZ 2017a: 5).

Europe is mentioned only in the last sentence, portrayed as agents combating Africa's issues, "European countries in particular can play a role in tackling these massive challenges by offering their knowledge, innovations and technological advances and getting directly involved." (BMZ 2017a: 5). Tying in the theoretical framework, this would add to the Eurocentric paternalist category of eurocentrism suggested above as well as link development to technological advancements, which historically has been a Western measure of development (Sardar 1999: 47).

The second thesis looks at Africa's need for African solutions and congratulates the forming of AU. It also emphasises how Germany and Europe must look at what Africa has to say and build a corporation upon that, which is interpreted here as taking a step away from the paternalistic eurocentrism (BMZ 2017a: 5).

Following this the third point highlights the needs of Africa's youth, especially targeting the need for job and training opportunities. The main challenge here is presented as delivering the required economic institutions to Africa, showing signs of Eurocentric institutionalism as other institutions or solutions are not considered.

Developing the necessary economic structures and creating new employment and training opportunities will be the central challenge. Africa's young people also need contact and interaction with Europe. Europe must develop a strategy that allows for legal migration whilst combating irregular migration and people smuggling (BMZ 2017a: 5).

As the economic cooperation between the continents is a priority in the Marshall Plan, it is natural for the policy makers to want as similar institutions as possible to ease the transcontinental economic agreements. It is nevertheless a Eurocentric assumption that the well-established Western institutions would perform better than other. This third point also presents Europe's need to revise their migration laws to enable legal migration whilst combating illegal migration (ibid.). The theme of migration is a reoccurring theme for the portrayal of European struggles, which ties in the self-image of Europe as a promised land characterised by peace and prosperity.

Fourth, emphasis is put on the private-sector as a creator of jobs and how Africa needs private investment rather than subsidies. In order for it to happen, must, according to the document, the environment become more attractive and safer for investors. The latter is suggested through developing the instruments to mobilise investment, but the attractive environment lacks concrete solution representations. This will be subject for another, economically focused research project to examine more thoroughly, but from a Eurocentric point of view, it appears to be focused on a Western liberal capitalist societal model.

The fifth point argues for the diversification of the African economy, moving away from a commodity dominated economy, and Europe's role in this is to improve the access to the EU single market and break up trade barriers (ibid: 6). As will be summed up in the end of this chapter, this specific solution responsibility from Europe's side is a reoccurring trend.

The sixth point looks at political rights which will also be analysed deeper later in the text as it is given a specific chapter.

On the seventh point it is expressed that the development cooperation will favour the countries which show the greater incentive to implement reforms regarding "(...) good governance, protection of human rights and economic developments" (ibid.: 6). Although this in itself is Eurocentric, as it implicitly says that the partnership will favour those who are the fastest to transition into more Western like societies, it is a positive shift from the pan-Africa discourse used throughout the document, lumping all African countries into one.

Eighth, the need for reforms also in Europe and on a global level are recognised in order to match the proposed African ones, turning away for a moment for the responsibilities of Africa. However, the examples in the paragraph are all focused on economics, highlighting the need for Europe to stop illicit financial flows and instead focus on fair trade, and not so much on cultural or social issues.

Private investment is emphasized again in the ninth point, recognising the limits of ODA and instead focusing on the possibilities private investment will bring to African countries, facilitated by ODA.

Finally, the tenth thesis points out that Germany will take their shared responsibility for the least developed countries, providing basic needs for people and meeting the challenges and possibilities of urbanisation. Girls and women are here given extra attention, which correlates with some of the comments on the website from UN Women Germany and Plan International Germany, showing

responsiveness of the policy makers (ibid.; BMZ 2018). If this sensitivity to outside views is reflected for comments from African representatives as well, the Marshall Plan has great potential to become the inclusive framework it aspires to be (BMZ 2017a: 4).

4.1.1 Values and Assets

In the first chapter, called “Africa - Europe’s partner continent”, historical relations are briefly reviewed before covering the values which serve as base for the partnership and possibilities of the African continent. The historical narrative presents responsibility for the sufferings of African countries and acknowledges how the wealth of industrialised countries is partly due to the exploitation of resources and slavery, presenting a more nuanced identity portrayal (BMZ 2017a: 7).

When covering values, the very first sentence claims that the cooperation is “(...) based on values and guided by common interests.” (ibid.). The values are thus not claimed to necessarily be shared, which is demonstrated by exemplifying the values with the first sentence in the German basic law (German constitution), stating that the human value is sacrosanct („Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar“), followed up by the moral obligations following the European humanist heritage without presenting corresponding values expressed in an African environment (BMZ 2017b). It is then however enhanced how the partnership represents mutual respect between the parts.

A Marshall Plan with Africa also symbolises achievement and mutual respect. It is guided by the interests of Africa and Europe. In the long term and as neighbours, we can either prosper together or suffer together (BMZ 2017a: 7).

However, this is somewhat undermined by the fact that at this point in the document, no reference to any comment or source with a representative from an African country acknowledging this policy idea has been presented. Still, the value of the paragraph is respecting African agency which in itself is a withdrawal from eurocentrism.

The problem representations in this chapter are mainly the poor use of Africa’s assets, both resource wise but also the diverse cultural and religious assets to provide social services. Also, some self-critique is presented as one of the problems are identified as Europe’s previous short term economic approach and how multinational companies are avoiding taxes. Finally, it is recognised how the appropriate structures has not been implemented, causing previous projects to fail. Boiled down to their core, the problem is identified as the lack of jobs and opportunities for Africa’s youth which is making them turn to look at Europe for more prosperous futures (BMZ 2017a: 8-10). This correlates to certain extent with Eurocentric institutionalism and the political myth of Europe as the promised land.

Solutions, or rather goal formulations, find women and minorities' agency in politics central, but the catchy phrase that it is the women of Africa that "(...) hold the key to the continent's future in their hands" (ibid.: 8) is not paired with any suggestions of cross continental cooperation for equality, indirectly hinting that corruption and exclusion from politics are problems of Africa's, not in Europe. At the end of the chapter, it is once again emphasised how the project will build on the African ideas laid out in Agenda 2063 (ibid.).

4.1.2 The Three Pillars

The next two chapters presents the three pillars of the Marshall Plan, highlighting prioritised areas which fall under the categories *Economic Activity*, *Peace and Security* and *Democracy and the Rule of Law* (BMZ 2017a: 12). A lot of them reflect back on the ten starting points presented earlier and will thus not be analysed again.

Before diving into the problems and solution suggestions of the pillars, Africa's status in the world politics is commented on, presenting how they on the basis of their potential, challenges and interconnectedness with the global economy and security should have a higher priority in international political forums.

At the same time, we must stop speaking on behalf of Africa. Africa can speak for itself. That is why Africa should gain a permanent seat on the UN Security Council and be represented in other international organisations in a way that reflects its increased importance (BMZ 2017a: 14).

The proposal of a permanent seat for Africa in the Security Council is here viewed as highlighting the agency of African countries, although it at first sight seems like a Western slur labelling Africa as a country. It could in fact be interpreted as norm breaking move to suggest a non-state member to the Security Council which has previously consisted of nation states, challenging Western agency in international institutions (ibid.).

The first pillar recognises the main problems as youth unemployment and a non-diverse economy, as previously presented. Here, the solutions are more slightly more defined than in the introductory sections of the documents, with specific undertakings presented for Africa, Germany and globally. The main solutions nevertheless follow the line Western institutions as well as an encouragement for Africa to ratify agreements connected to less red tape in business and trade, such as the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (ibid.). Other suggestions remain quite vague. For example, "[i]mprove the environment for doing business" can only be analysed in based on the context, which has proven to favour Western models, and thus it can only be assumed that this refers to a westernisation of the way business is made in Africa (ibid.).

The second pillar looks at peace and security. The problem representations look exclusively at crises on the African continent, and the solutions follow the

same geographical division as the previous pillar with emphasis on how the international community can aid Africa in reaching peace and stability (ibid.: 19-20). This again discursively places Europe in a paternal position, ready to aid Africa. The problem from a Eurocentric perspective is thus not that war and crisis are recognised as problems, rather that it is portrayed in a supposed partnership for mutual cooperation that this is an issue only Africa struggles with.

The third pillar highlight the road towards in themselves Eurocentric values, namely democracy, rule of law and human rights, again reflecting on the pride Europe takes in their humanist heritage presented on page 7 in the document (ibid.: 7, 21). The problem representation is thus interpreted as the lack of these values in Africa. The solutions focus on, for Africa's part, strengthening the trust to politicians and governments by for example raising the wages of civil servants in order to combat corruption, and strengthen transparency. From Germany's side, one example not previously touched upon is to implement youth exchange similar to ERASMUS between EU member states (ibid.: 21). The latter exemplifies another European programme which the policy maker wants to transfer to the African context.

4.1.3 Possibilities and Outlook

Chapter four looks at possibilities regarding food and agriculture, protection of natural resources, energy and infrastructure, and education. This chapter is more on the technical side, and few additional findings of value than the ones already presented have been identified. The chapter does however present a more gender and sustainability aware discourse, when for example talking about the need of focusing on mothers and pregnant women to combat malnutrition and the investment in renewable energy sources (BMZ 2017a: 24-32). These are historically not Western values, seeing as Western capitalism has not favoured an abstemious approach to natural resource extraction (see chapter **2.3 Eurocentrism**) and equality still is a present political struggle. They do however reflect on the Sustainable Development Goals, Agenda 2030, and present an opportunity for Germany to fulfil their international responsibility, adding to their state identity (Global Goals 2018).

Finally, chapter five presents an outlook for the future work on and implementation of the Marshall Plan. Here, conversations with both African leaders and representatives from the civil society are mentioned among other points, a positive remark from a Eurocentric point of view as it lays out the ideas for scrutiny by non-westerners (BMZ 2017a: 33).

4.1.4 Summary

Having gone through the blueprint for the Marshall Plan with Africa from top to bottom, some central, reoccurring features have been identified which will be

summarised before stepping into the second section of the analysis, reflecting on silences and effects.

First, mindful that Eurocentric does not by definition mean malign, some but not all of the problem representations have been shown to rest on Eurocentric value grounds, placed in Eurocentric paternalism following Hobson's chart. The most prominent examples are the one tracked approach to Western economic and societal institutions and values, and the very fact that the partnership is called Marshall Plan, discursively placing Africa in the post-Second World War state of Europe.

Second, the suggested partnership focuses overwhelmingly on the struggles and possibilities of Africa, and those of Europe are undermined and linked to the effects of the African struggles, namely migrants. However, African actors are not reduced to issues of hunger, migration and crisis, but also acknowledged as agents throughout the document. Yet, the tools they would be presented with as agents following this document are based on a Western societal model, despite references to AU's Agenda 2063. The problem representations and solutions could thus be boiled down to an issue of Africa not being enough like the West in order for Europe and Africa to have a successful economic partnership, and the solution for them to become more like West. Following Hansen's theory on Othering in foreign policy, in some historical narratives it has been found to be part of a Eurocentric bias to strive for the Other to turn more like the Self (2006: 43). This finding frames what in the theory chapter was referred to as westernisation.

Finally, the aim to give Africa agency to create their own solutions paired with these Eurocentric tendencies make interesting identity constructions. Reflecting back on the poststructural theory regarding policy discourse as social, the aspiration to move away from a donor and recipient relationship present in most solution representations could very well be a discursive aim to please uprising nationalist and protectionist political oppositions in Europe by restricting aid (BMZ 2017a: 13; Hansen 2006: 1, 56; Rinke 2017). The same goes for the notion to restrict light arm sales instead of cutting them completely. The support for Agenda 2063 and the efforts to make other states do the same reflects on the discursive construction of the ethical state identity of Germany (BMZ 2017a: 13).

4.2 Effects and Silences

Seeing as the document is a proposed partnership, implying mutual benefits, the greatest silence in the protocol is exactly what Germany expects Europe to gain out of this partnership. Some things have been presented briefly, as with the example of migration presented in the previous section, whereas others have been hinted, such as Africa's opportunity of gaining access to the European single market. The latter implies that the opposite would be the case as well, giving Europe first hand access to the African market. Furthermore, the Chinese advances in Africa are not mentioned either, even though commentators many

times point out how it seems to be a new scramble for Africa emerging (see e.g. Poplak 2016; Al Jazeera 2014; and Pilling 2017). The historical relations are covered, with Europe taking some responsibility for the current state of their neighbour continent, an acknowledgement which humbles Western achievements and places them in a relational light.

Another silence does however lie in lack of awareness of the growing migration *to* Africa from other continents (SVT 2018), and the gains for Europe from knowledge, cultural and social exchanges, a silence which effectively undermines African agency. Africa is trusted with agency to help themselves, aided by Europe, but seems not to be believed to provide valuable contributions to Europe. It is also worth noting, as one of the comments *not* published on BMZ's website pointed out, how this partnership was not initiated by Africa (Schwikowski 2017). Seeing as the African Union Commission published a ten-year implementation plan covering far more extensive implementation strategies for the solutions presented, one questions the need for a German/European initiative focused on aiding the same Agenda 2063 goals (African Union Commission: 108). For the solutions to be truly African as expressed in the Marshall Plan it would presumably have left room for African agents to incentivise a partnership if they found it suitable. This suggests a somewhat restless West wanting to hurry the development, creating a stable market suitable for established business models and curbing the migration flows.

The main discursive effects from this policy document, framing what is allowed and normal contra prohibited and unimaginable, are thus confirming a Eurocentric view of what successful development and societal models ought to look like. Once more stressing how Eurocentric does not necessarily mean malign, few angles in the document has presented solutions not stemming from a Western societal model, knowledge or culture. As brought up earlier, Europe discursively claims to an identity of reliever and Africa the one in need of relief. However, by encouraging Agenda 2063, it also discursively plants seeds about African agency, which in future policy documents could be initiated by African agents, making them the subjects of change rather than objects.

All in all, as this research does not set out to analyse economical or developmental effects but the discourse, the document has provided both sections of highly Eurocentric discourse and assumptions as well as more inclusive language. Reading the document in its entirety, as became clear in section one, many parts which were questioned in the beginning were clarified and less Eurocentric approaching the end.

5 Concluding Remarks

This research has examined the problem formulations in Germany's new proposed Africa policy named Marshall Plan with Africa. It finds that although African solutions and agency are encouraged, Western institutions and values acts as foundations for most policy suggestions, reflecting Eurocentric biases. The problem formulations are heavily focused on African issues despite the branding as a new partnership which creates asymmetrical identity representations where the main issues of West are presented as a small part of the effects of Africa's challenges. The political myth of Europe as a vehicle for peace and prosperity seems to an ever-present theme in the relationship representations between the continents.

Seeing as the document encourages the implementation of already outlined goal formulations by the African Union, the research has questioned the need for the West to incentivise a partnership, instead of leaving room for the opposite relationship. This, alongside the encouragement to award countries making faster progress towards the reforms suggested in the Marshall Plan suggests a restless West, impatient to have the necessary institutions and environment in place for them to make business more efficiently in Africa and inhibit migration to Europe.

5.1 Future Research

This paper has focused on presenting a profound policy discourse analysis of the document for future research and policy revisions to build upon.

The next step continuing the analysis would be to first and foremost compare the findings presented here to those of another researcher, using the same theories and material in order to validate them. It also presents a starting point for research connecting the other questions in Bacchi's method, looking at possible ways to disrupt the problem representations.

A similar approach as the one used in this study could be used to analyse the policy suggestions in Agenda 2063 in order to situate the problem formulations to their geopolitical world views and compare the findings. Is Agenda 2063 biased by eurocentrism as well or do they highlight solutions with other origins? The results would lead to interesting follow up questions to the document analysed here, especially should there be findings contradicting the findings presented in this paper. It would undeniably be interesting to test if Hobson's claims of Eurocentrism in the field of IR constituting our political knowledge of the world has transferred to the solutions in Agenda 2063, or if the solutions are a product of

a different problem representation stemming from an understanding of the world based on other historical and cultural discourses.

Had the study allowed for more space and a larger financial scope, interviews with policy makers on these areas alongside an even more comprehensive analysis of previous documents could have given the findings additional support or presented a more heterogenous discourse. Finally, seeing as the project is still in its starting phase, research examining and evaluating the effects of the policy will be needed in the future.

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