Borders, Boundaries and Identity in a Divided Europe

A Sociology of Europeanisation

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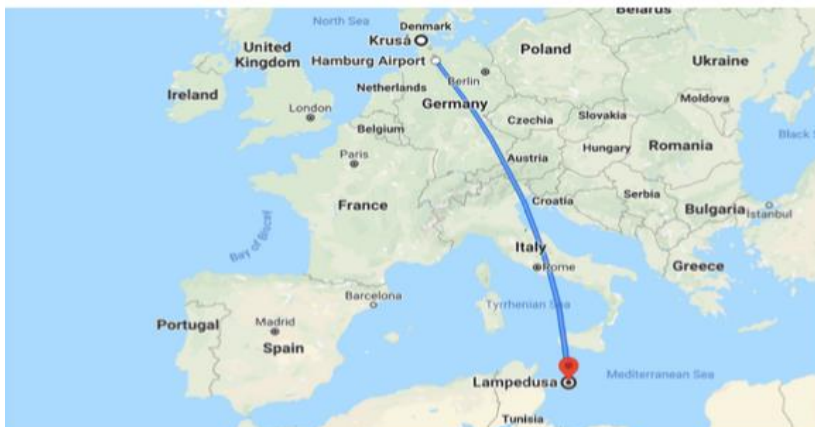Supervisor: Magnus Ring

Number of Words: **22.268**

Sites of Investigation

Porta d'Europa by Mimmo Paladino in 2008, Lampedusa, Italy - a memorial to migrants who perished while attempting to reach Europe

The Danish-German border zone in Southern Jutland

Distance from the Danish-German border region to Lampedusa: 2.541 km

"We hope to see a Europe where men of every country will think of being a European as of belonging to their native land, and ... wherever they go in this wide domain ... will truly feel, here I am at home"

- Winston Churchill (1948)

"La mia speranza è che un giorno possano nascere gli Stati Uniti d'Europa, ora appare un'utopia, lo abbiamo visto sulla questione dei migranti, in cui ogni Stato ha dato spazio al suo egoismo nazionale"

- Liliana Segre (2018)

"It's my belief that we in Europe have neither a common language, nor common values, nor common interests, that, in a word, Europe doesn't exist, and that it will never constitute a people or support a possible democracy (see the etymology of the term), simply because it doesn't want to constitute a people. In short, Europe is just a dumb idea that has gradually turned into a bad dream, from which we shall eventually wake up"

- Michel Houellebecq (2019)

Abstract

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Based on qualitative data, I explore notions of collective identities within Europe – in particular, whether and how the EU and Europe evoke a sense of belonging. The main data comprises 12 semi-structured interviews with Europeans living in two different border regions, Lampedusa and the Danish-German borderland, together with pro- and anti-European movements and communities. The interviews are conceptualised and examined as narratives, with the aim of investigating how and when multiple identities surface, how social and symbolic boundaries are drawn and what this examination reveals about a collective European identity. To link the micro level to the macro level, the narratives are complemented with a critical discourse analysis that examines the discursive field of Europeanisation. The main theoretical framework comprises collective identities in relation to the European social space. Additionally, cosmopolitanism and Euroscepticism are conceptualised as two ideal types that are deployed to investigate how different social actors within the sphere of politics and media compete in influencing the further evolution of Europe. Overall, I argue that there is not one overarching collective European identity, but instead a broad range of competing narratives and discourses that attempt to ascribe fixed meanings to what a European identity comprises, whether it exists and which role it should play. Within the narratives, social actors' identities appear to be more fragmented than united, but individuals can employ the European identity to represent themselves in a particular way depending on the context. In the study, I demonstrate that discourses and narratives overlap each other when recognising the uncertain future of Europe. In turn, this uncertainty offers novel playgrounds for imagining another Europe.

Keywords: borders, boundaries, multiple identities, Europeanisation, crisis, cosmopolitanism, Euroscepticism

Popular Science Summary

The idea of a European identity has been a recurring point of discussion within political science and sociology. Nonetheless, sociologists have mostly remained in the background while political scientists have employed quantitative data to compare how European citizens identify themselves with the EU. As questions from surveys are distant from the context in which lived experiences and social relations influence people's attachment to Europe, I have conducted 12 semi-structured interviews with people from different parts of Europe. These interviews are investigated as unfolding narratives. I focus on how social and symbolic boundaries are drawn, with the aim of demonstrating how people possess different kinds of identities and what those identities say about the existence of a collective European identity. I theoretically demonstrate that there is a need for another way of conceptualising a collective European identity since the constitutive foundation stones of such differ from those of national identities. To cover different social and political levels, I have conducted three interviews with people living on the Italian island of Lampedusa, four with people from the Danish–German border region and five with representatives of pro- and anti-European movements and communities. Moreover, as Europe has been facing various crises that have affected European citizens to various degrees, I draw attention to how the interviewees have experienced these crises and what role they ascribe to the EU as a political entity and Europe as a continent.

To go beyond simply exploring the micro-level through European citizens' lived experiences, I present a critical discourse analysis that draws attention to prevailing macro-discourses in contemporary Europe. By involving two worldviews, cosmopolitanism and Euroscepticism, I demonstrate how social actors within the sphere of politics and media utilise different ideologies in their pursuit to influence the evolution of Europe.

I argue that there is still not one overarching collective European identity, but several narratives and discourses that attempt to define what European identity is, whether it exists and what role it should play in times of crisis. The interviewees' identities move between levels, often from the local to the national, before reaching the European level. This phenomenon demonstrates that people are still predominantly connected to the local and national levels, although the younger interviewees were more inclined to involve Europe in their narratives. This finding suggests that a collective European identity could evolve in the future. Lastly, the analysed discourses and narratives recognise that Europe is facing an uncertain future. Some actors and groups are demanding more European cooperation, while others desire a transformation of the current political system or a return to the nation-state.

Foreword

As I was writing this foreword, the coronavirus was sweeping not just through Europe but the world. European leaders seemed paralysed by the severity of the situation, and no joint solution to combat the virus was in sight. Italy and Spain were begging Germany and other European countries for help, while receiving donations of masks and medical equipment from China. Instead of seeking European cooperation to cope with the pandemic, national prime ministers decided to act for their nations' best interests, most symbolically by closing the European borders, not only to the world beyond Europe but also within the European Union itself; this was the first time the Schengen passport-free travel zone had been suspended since its implementation in 1995 (Nelsson, 2020). The new situation also meant that the other European crisis, Brexit, was put on hold with all political negotiations postponed. Paradoxically, the pandemic also put a hold on this research process, as my planned field-work to various sites in Europe was cancelled. Notwithstanding this particular outcome, the situation clarified how the nation-state is still in charge when global issues emerge; data from June 2020 clarify that European citizens deemed the EU irrelevant during the pandemic (Butler, 2020). Therefore, as it has been many times before in contemporary Europe, the role of the European Union has again been brought to the fore. To many, it remains opaque and widely disputed, prompting concerns over a project that some believe has fallen into a quagmire. At the same time, if we are to believe the well-known words of one of the founding fathers of the Union, Jean Monnet, who proclaimed that Europe would be built through crises, and thus be the sum of their solutions, we can ask ourselves: What sort of Europe will emerge in the aftermath of Brexit and the coronavirus?

As a student of sociology, experiencing the coronavirus yielded one particular line of thought: how social relations are constitutive for the way in which we situate and orient ourselves in the world, and how they affect our adherence to local, national, European, or even global sites in the world. I consider myself Danish and European, although study-periods abroad have made me more aware of being categorised as European. Being able to move freely within the European Union, in interplay with the Erasmus exchange program, has provided me with a large social network comprising many nationalities and views on Europe. I also represent a certain group in terms of age, educational status and global awareness that is said to be in favour of the political European project (Standard Eurobarometer 89, 2018). This discourse has struck me as questionable and ambiguous, since a great deal of young people, most recently in the 2019 European elections[1] but also in the Brexit

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[1] 42% of 18-24 years old voted in comparison to 28% in 2014 (Eurobarometer, 2019).

referendum,[2] have abstained from voting. Nonetheless, this has only increased my curiosity regarding the ways in which people conceive of themselves in relation to Europe and the European Union.

The prompt for my investigation of a collective European identity in close relation to the boundaries and borders of Europe arose while I was reading my supervisor, Magnus Ring's, work on borders and boundaries within sociological thinking. He concludes with the reasoning: "… there are also discussions … on a more abstract level, for instance regarding what (if any) a European collective identity would be …" (Ring, 2020, p. 38). This reflection led to a key question: To what extent does an actual collective European identity exist in the minds of European citizens, and if so, what does it consist of?

This initiated a long journey into a divided continent, where borders and boundaries continue to play a divisive role, and the existence of a European identity remains highly contested. At the outset of this master's thesis, I argue, in line with the German sociologist, Klaus Eder (2015), that political and cultural sociology require an analysis of the social processes through which the experience of crisis is processed and made meaningful for a collectivity of people.

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[2] About 64% of 18-24 years old voted (Spratt, 2018).

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1. Introduction

1.1. Setting the Stage

In January 2020, the United Kingdom left the European Union after three years in a state of political paralysis (*BBC*, 2020). The rest is yet to come, while the fact remaining is that the European Union has lost one of its cornerstones.

   While the beginning of the new decade was centred around Brexit, the following months began to inscribe themselves as yet another inconceivable layer in Europe's already multifaceted history. In March 2020, the coronavirus struck the European continent, causing national leaders to close down whole societies – the European economy is now in a freefall, and the EU has been compelled to create viable economic recovery packages to signal potency and unity in a time of crisis. The Spanish prime minister, Pedro Sánchez, has expressed his concerns for the future of Europe: "Without solidarity there can be no cohesion, without cohesion there will be disaffection and the credibility of the European project will be severely damaged" (Sánchez, 2020). As the viability of the political project is once again being questioned, the task now lies in elucidating the current and future prospects of a Europe facing another epochal crisis.

1.2. A Persistent European Crisis

The notion of 'crisis' is nothing new in terms of European politics. It has rather been the common denominator for how the EU, politically, has performed during the last two decades.[1] However, the inflation of the notion of 'crisis' has led to the idea of a social world in disorder. That is, the European citizens affected by the crisis, i.e. those whose routines have been disrupted and whose material welfare has been threatened, have become more likely to ascribe negative attributes to the European Union, while its scope for action is perceived as being constrained, which is why they: "… return to their national container where they feel 'at home'" (Eder, 2015, p. 271). At the same time, to speak of a crisis requires a perspective of critique; it needs to be clear what the crisis constitutes and how it is being understood by different social actors (Delanty, 2018, p. 5).

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[1] Epitomised by terms such as declining 'output legitimacy', 'democratic deficit', 'the Eurozone crisis', 'Refugee crisis', 'Euroscepticism', and the end of an era with the 'Permissive Consensus' (Favell, 2017; Guiraudon, Ruzz & Trenz, 2005, p. 5).

1.3. 'Europeanisation' and the Role of Sociology

As the answers to the EU's issues have predominantly been proposed by political scientists (Eder, 2009, p. 436; Guiraudon, Ruzza & Trenz, 2015, p. 5), there is a need for another way of approaching the crises facing Europe (Favell & Guiraudon, 2009, p. 555). Here, sociology has played a less decisive role in comparison to political scholars, who have specialised in internal institutional analysis at the expense of overlooking how European integration is experienced from below (Trenz, 2016, p. 2). If we are to conceptualise what a 'European society' could consist of, the common past, experiences, shared values, and interactions across borders would be one way to home in on how Europeanisation[2] is being experienced. This leads one to an inevitable reflection regarding the extent to which the highly contested conception of a collective European identity actually exists, and how adherence to it can take on the role of potential mediator for the foundation of a European 'togetherness'. Moreover, as many debates regarding European identity take place at the political elite level (Armbruster, Rollo & Meinhof, 2003, p. 888; Eder, 2006, p. 257), I find it imperative to delve into European citizens' life-worlds to explore to what extent they feel European and the kinds of role they impute to the EU as a political project, and Europe as a continent.

According to sociologists, there is widespread consensus on the need for a collective European identity. This relates to how the European past is recalled[3] and Europe's role in a globalised world order (Giesen & Bernhard, 2003, p. 21). In the same vein, as societies are becoming ever more complex, differentiated and interdependent, indirect social relations increase in number, having for instance been rendered possible by technological means, necessitating a collective identity that compensates for the lack of direct relationships and thus enhances 'organic solidarity'[4] at the European level (Eder, 2009, p. 430; Delanty, 2018, p. 214; Outhwaite, 2008, p. 124; Trenz, 2016, pp. 40–41).

According to Ulrich Beck, what is lacking is not a single European identity but a narrative of Europeanisation that makes sense of the interrelations between new departures and declines (Beck & Grande, 2007, p. 4). Narrative constructions can be deployed to study collective

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[2] Europeanisation has often substituted the term 'European integration' and is closely linked to globalisation: "Globalisation … exists within Europeanisation and indeed through it …" (Delanty, 2005, p. 408). Trenz (2016) highlights that Europeanisation also can be seen as a story of social change and integration in Europe, i.e. ways of imagining the emergence of a European society and demarcating its unity and diversity (Trenz, 2016, p. xviii).

[3] The process of modernity in Europe has been anything but linear; Europe amidst late-modernity has been troubled by economic collapses, rising xenophobia, increasing inequality and fears of migration (Delanty & Rumford, 2005, p. 29).

[4] Durkheim (1893) argued in *The Division of Labour in Society* that there had been a shift in forms of solidarity (Durkheim, 1893). While pre-modern societies were characterised by a mechanical form of solidarity (i.e. interdependence through similarity), modern societies are characterised by organic solidarity (i.e. constituted by interdependence through dissimilarity) (Thijssen, 2012, p. 456).

imaginings of the social bonds that bind people together (Trenz, 2015, pp. xv–xvii). The multiple identities[5] appearing in narratives and discourses can be dissected by borders and boundaries.[6] I will also examine how local, national, European and global meanings surface in social actors' narratives due to an increasing interest in Europeanisation and multiple identities (Guglielmi & Vezzoni, 2016, p. 141).

Following the arguments above, it becomes evident that there is a need to identify particular sites and stories of narrative networks emerging in Europe (Eder, 2009, p. 444). I therefore introduce two border sites in Europe: the Italian island, Lampedusa, and the Danish–German border region. They have been chosen due to my interest in how borders affect people's perceptions of identity and being part of Europe, i.e. the roles the EU and Europe play in people's minds. Moreover, this choice will enable me to examine how people's narratives differ and fuse in relation to geographical position, with Lampedusa representing Europe's external border and the Danish–German border region as a border within Europe. Border regions are worth studying because one might expect a hardening of local and national identities, however, Marti Kohli argues: "… even here, identities may be renegotiated through daily interactions and conflicts … and the European level of identity may become more salient" (Kohli, 2000, p. 132). Moreover, as both sites have been exposed to influxes of migrants to differing degrees, the comparison provides an interesting way to shed light on how people draw boundaries between 'us' and 'them'; boundaries are presumed to undergo a transformation, i.e. from being abstract to concrete.

1.4. Lampedusa and the Danish-German Border Region

Lampedusa's geographical position as Europe's external border has come to mean that large numbers of migrants and refugees disembark on the island after hazardous journeys from the North African coast[7] (Cooper & Tinning, 2020).

Michela Franceschelli (2019) has analysed how migration nurtures populist discourses at the community level; how an island with 6,572 residents, inhabiting 20.2 square kilometres, has been affected by influxes of migrants. Her conclusion highlights that it is not migration but

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[5] Multiple identities refer to social agents' identification with and/or membership in specific social groups and categories. In contemporary societies, people are likely to have more than one meaningful identity (Deaux, 2015, p. 321). The interest is thus found in how people combine various identity categories to construct their identities in different contexts.

[6] Borders are broadly defined as institutionalised borders, written down in the form of legal texts (i.e. fixed and orderly). Conversely, boundaries refer to the realities people have formed in their imaginations – what Europe consists of, who Europeans are, and who they are not (i.e. fluid and negotiable) (Ring, 2020, p. 31).

[7] In 2018, 2,299 migrants died in the Mediterranean Sea (Cooper & Tinning, 2020).

instead the absence of help from the Italian state that is the major issue (Franceschelli, 2019, p. 14). In extension of Franceschelli's work and findings, further work needs to be done if we are to analyse how the local population relates the refugee crisis to Europe.

In the Danish-German border region, Danes and Germans live alongside one another as good neighbours. Since the turn of the millennium (2001), the region has benefitted from the Schengen border cooperation. This has made it easy for Germans and Danes to cross the border, leading to increasing cross-border shopping and vacations. However, in 2015, the refugee crisis put a hold on the open border zone, when three hundred Syrian refugees tried to reach Sweden on foot by walking alongside the E45 motorway (*The Telegraph*, 2015). In response to the arrival of refugees, the then Danish prime minister, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, declared that the Schengen cooperation was in danger, and the only right solution was to implement temporary border controls (*The Local*, 2016), which have been renewed ever since.[8]

1.5. Pro- and Anti-European Narratives

To cover different social and political levels, I include narratives from official pro- and anti-EU movements and communities. By relating their narratives to macro-discourses revolving around cosmopolitanism and Euroscepticism, I demonstrate how and to what extent different discourses resonate with the interviewees' narratives. This makes it possible for me to link the micro to the macro-level, a further field of investigation that scholars researching Europeanisation have called for in the past (see Eder, 2014; Favell, 2017; Favell & Guiraudon, 2009).

1.6. Aims, Research Questions and Delimitations

As a consequence of the corona crisis, my field trips to Lampedusa and the Danish–German border region were cancelled. Fortunately, by contacting people on social media and through personal networks, I was able to conduct twelve successful semi-structured interviews, which eventually will constitute four narratives in the analysis.

In the thesis, my focus is not on how the EU, as a polity, is constructed and functions, nor on specific European treaties, nor what the enactment of a European constitution would mean for the idea of a collective European identity, related to Habermas' idea of 'constitutional patriotism' (see e.g. Habermas, 1992; 2012). Instead, I strive to demonstrate how multiple identities surface in the narratives and what this reveals about the existence of a collective

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[8] The border-control has nonetheless been a controversial subject of controversy as it violates the regulatory framework of the Schengen cooperation (Sørensen, 2018).

European identity. The purpose is heuristic, as I focus on differences and similarities through the study of how and when boundaries are drawn. As the narratives I examine are linked to political questions, my interest resides in what the EU represents, and how it fits with the analysed material that is supposed to capture macro-discourses on Europeanisation. The overarching aim is to enquire into identity processes, which will explore notions of collective identities and the existence of a European togetherness in times of a crisis.

The research questions are as follows:

1. *How do pro and sceptical EU movements and communities conceive of the EU and Europe, and to what extent do they reflect the narratives found on Lampedusa and in the Danish–German border region?*

2. *How and when do multiple identities surface in the interviewees' narratives?*

3. *What do the interviewees' narratives disclose about the existence of a collective European identity, and how do they interact and resonate with macro-discourses of Europeanisation?*

1.7. Disposition

I would like to remind the reader that instead of having a definition list, I explain how I understand and make use of concepts in the text and footnotes.

The general structure of the thesis is outlined as follows:

(i)   first, I will draw attention to how the concept of European identity has been conceptualised and elucidated in the past

(ii)   I will then introduce the theory of science underpinning the thesis, drawing attention to the role of language and how I position myself in a contested field

(iii)   I will then home in on the usage of different data, and the deployment of three different methods: discourse analysis, narrative analysis and the semi-structured interview

(iv)   in the theoretical section, the concepts of cosmopolitanism and Euroscepticism will be presented, followed by a conceptualisation of how to study collective identities

(v)   the analysis will comprise a historical overview on epoch-making transitions in Europe, before the discourse and narrative analyses are presented

(vi)   the discussion and conclusion will focus on Europe's contemporary crossroad, and what we can learn from this study

Introduction: Europe in Crisis

Previous Research on
European Identity

Theory of Science:
Reflexivity and Constructivism

Methodology &
Data Treatment

Cosmopolitanism,
Euroscepticism and
Theory of Collective Identities

Historical Overview

Cosmopolitanism:
Weak and Strong Forms

Euroscepticism:
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MACRO-LEVEL

MICRO-LEVEL

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The Political Struggle of the EU

The Enthusiastic Europeans

Lampedusa:
The Feeling of Abandonment

Danish/German Border Region:
A Unique Relationship

Discussion:
Europe at a Crossroads

Theory of Science
Methods
Analysis/Discussion

Conclusion

2. Previous Research

I will now adumbrate how European identity has been conceptualised and elucidated in the past, accentuating how previous research has influenced the choices I have made in this thesis.

2.1. A Historical Outline of the European Research Agenda

Before the fall of the Berlin Wall, most research was devoted to the relationship between European citizens and the political system (Duchesne, 2008, p. 3). Scholars relied on surveys from the Eurobarometer to compare citizens' opinions. The questions posed were mostly concerned with 'output legitimacy' in terms of how satisfied European citizens were with the political system (Duchesne et al., 2013, p. 8). From a sociological point of view, it is striking how little interest there was in discussing whether there needed to be a European society to form the underlying support for the political project. The dividing-line in research was found amongst political scientists relying on statistical data, and the more theory- and normative-driven 'cosmopolitan social theory' represented by thinkers such as Giddens, Habermas, Bauman and Beck (Favell, 2017; Favell & Guidaron, 2009, p. 556).

After the 1990s, new questions were posed in surveys, most conspicuously the so-called 'Moreno question,' asking to what extent European citizens in the future would consider themselves to be and feel European. However, little research was devoted to how macro-changes came to affect European citizens in their everyday lives and to what extent it could indicate the existence of a European identity (Favell, 2005, p. 1109). Concurrently, disciplines such as international relations and political science began to move towards sociological claims – concocted by an interest in constructivism that brought power, discourse and ideology into the research agenda. The outcome of this was that European identity became conceived of as nothing but a discursive and imagined entity (Delanty & Rumford, 2005, p. 14), an elite fabrication without any concern for how actual citizens would conceive of it. This view was enhanced by Benedict Anderson's idea of imagined communities, and thus constructed by European anthems, flags, branding devices, etc. In spite of these devices, there was a lacuna between the idea of a European society and its citizens; the politics and policies were real, but society was imaginary[9] (Favell, 2017, pp. 193-196).

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[9] To what extent is it meaningful to speak of a European society? This is a debate that has been ongoing since the 1990s. Delanty (2018) points out: "The answer in many ways depends on what is meant by the notion of society". Delanty suggests seeing it in terms of a historical process of transformation with major social changes (Delanty, 2018, pp. 144-146). I complement him with Eder's view: "Defining society as a network of social relations in which notions of fairness and the good circulate, we observe social relations that crosscut the group of the nation …" (Eder, 2015, p. 273).

When looking into what political scientists have ascribed value to in terms of identification with Europe, one cannot avoid stumbling upon the dichotomy between civic and cultural dimensions (Bruter, 2004, p. 26). Although it is a highly valuable approach when asking how people, subjectively, think of their identity in relation to politics and culture, it does not tell us much about how social relations beyond the nation-state affect questions of identity. Moreover, political scientists' overt interest in how voting and political preferences can be associated with the making of a European civic identity is, from a sociological point of view, questionable, because being or feeling European could also be the outcome of shopping across borders, student experiences, travelling, or being part of international networks,[10] which is one of the focal points in this thesis.

2.2. System Integration and Identity as a Concept

I have now outlined how the research agenda has evolved since the 1970s. It can be inferred that research on European integration has been dominated by a 'top-down approach', with quantitative methods at the helm, prioritising political and economic aspects of integration while overlooking social transformations that have occurred concurrently in European societies. This perspective can be denoted as system integration at the expense of social integration (Delanty & Rumford, 2005, p.185). European identity has predominantly been measured in public opinion terms with a clear focus on attitudes toward the EU, demonstrating sceptical and disenchanted outcomes (Favell, Recchi, 2019, p. 7; Eder, 2009, p. 443). This kind of research focuses on the feedback effect on the individual level, without making theoretical sense of collective identity constructions (Ibid., pp.443–444; Trenz & de Wilde, 2009, p.15). Questions from surveys are problematic, since they are distant from the context in which lived experiences play a part in citizens' attachment to the EU and Europe (Frognier, 2013, pp. 201–202). Moreover, statistical constructions do not exhibit social bonds, nor define boundaries, which is a core interest in this thesis (Eder, 2014, p. 224).

In terms of research on European identity,[11] there has in recent years been an emphasis on multiple identities. Identities and loyalties may be 'nested,' 'cross-cutting,' 'separate,' or similar to a 'marble cake'; these concepts are applied to demonstrate how people possess divergent identities in different contexts (Bourne, 2015, pp. 56–57; Guglielmi & Vezzoni, 2016, p. 142). This corresponds with the approach I will deploy, since I am interested in how identities overlap

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[10] Steffen Mau (2010) argues that 'social transnationalism' within an across Europe is a fact of everyday life.
[11] In contemporary survey research on European identity, 'Loosely European' is the main formulation used by Europeans to frame themselves (Recchi, 2019, p. 279).

and take different shapes depending on the context in which the interviewees articulate views or draw attention to social experiences.

2.3. The Sociological Advent

When Juan Diez Medrano published *Framing Europe* in 2003, sociology began to play a more prominent role in research on European identity. His methodological approach stood out due to the large number of interviews he conducted in conjunction with Eurobarometer data (Duchesne et al., 2013, p. 13). Another example is Hans-Jörg Trenz's (2016) book *Narrating European Society*, illustrating how Europeanisation has brought about divergent narratives (Trenz, 2016, p. 12). It offers a perspective on how social actors compete within discursive fields, particularly in the world of scholars and the media (Trenz 2016, p.142). Herein, one can find different levels of societal emergence; identities, interests and social projects generating new social realities.[12]

The most inspirational research is the work done by Ulrike Hanna Meinhof, Heidi Armbruster and Craig Rollo, who conducted a study of *Everyday Narratives in European Border Communities* (2003). They underline how identity politics have arisen in the European space, implying that people have become more concerned with the formation of insider and outsider groups (Ambruster, Meinhof & Rollo, 2003, p. 888). The study resembles that conducted in this thesis, insofar as their curiosity emanated from whether, and how, people living close to border zones ascribe value to Europe as part of their border narratives. Their findings highlight that Europe and the EU do not enter the narratives of people living close to the EU's eastern and south-eastern borders. Nonetheless, there was a slight feeling of belonging when the interviewees drew the line between less privileged outsiders and Europeans themselves (Ambruster, Meinhof & Rollo, 2003, p. 898). In a more recent perspective, Eder (2015) asserts: "The social sciences so far have not succeeded in making visible the emptiness of social relations within the EU container and making visible the traces of emerging social relations among a people beyond the nation state" (Eder, 2015, p. 286), making the current situation in Europe even more interesting in terms of examining whether a European identity exists that goes beyond the nation-state.

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[12] It is argued that it is in the shifting discursive contexts and in the dynamics of Europe's current 'critical juncture' that future research on European identity ought to be situated to study the legitimation of the EU project (Delanty and Rumford, 2005, p. 19; Zappetini, 2019, p. 181).

3. Theory of Science

In the following, I explain my reasoning for selecting a social constructivist and reflexive approach. The focal points concern the role of language in the form of narratives and discourses, and my own positioning in a contested field. My point of departure is an anti-reductionist epistemology, meaning that I recognise the manifold nature of social reality, and the appertaining multiplicity of possible interpretations.

3.1. A Reflexive Approach to Europeanisation

When touching upon reflexivity, I argue that sociology is inextricably part of the social world, affects social reality, and is influenced by and conditional upon social conditions. As I inscribe myself in a contested field, I cannot avoid bringing biases into the research that demand attention and openness to forge a satisfactory degree of transparency. By the same token, sociology needs to be self-questioning in terms of theory, practicality and usefulness; reflected in the logical coherence emerging in the arguments presented (Delanty and Rumford, 2005, p. 14; McLain, 2002, p. 250). Being reflexive means being conscious of the social, ethical and political impact of the research (Lumsden, 2019, p. 4), which is highly relevant since the politics and knowledge of Europeanisation are contested amongst various social actors (Kauppi, 2018, p. xiii). Furthermore, as I include and examine the lived experiences of European citizens, I strive to situate myself in the place these groups occupy in the wider social space within Europe.

As reflexivity draws attention to the historical and social circumstances in which knowledge is produced, it is paramount to accentuate that the neglect of sociological research[13] has affected the way in which I approach the field: "European citizens have weak knowledge of European politics, and are on the whole not interested in European Parliament …" (Kauppi, 2018, p. xxi). Since political identification with and comprehension of the EU are, to a large extent, absent, I strive to demonstrate how social relations in Europeans' narratives can shed light on otherwise overlooked features of identity formations. At the same time, being a European citizen myself has meant that I have been able to question who we are as Europeans, and what we have in common that binds us together.

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[13] An illustrative example is found in the book *Brexit: Sociological Responses* (2017), in which sociologists argue that when political and cultural cleavages were receiving attention within the EU and nation-states, the usefulness of social foundations was still a marginal topic; political and social scientists could remain behind their desktops and rely on data from the Eurobarometer and the European Social Survey, meaning that there was no apparent incentive to go 'out there' and explore how European citizens conceive of the EU and being European (Favell, 2017).

3.2. Social Constructivism – Ontological Realism and Constructivist Epistemology

I am interested in deploying an analytical model that combines micro and macro parameters in the study of identities, allowing me to explore how the interviewees' narratives interact and resonate with dominant discourses. In this study, a social constructivist approach is deemed relevant, because it highlights the transformative capacity of societies and ascribes value to the role of identity within dynamic societies, while simultaneously pointing out how tensions between systemic and social integration emerge (Delanty & Rumford, 2005, pp. 15–16).

One significant point needs clarification: I do not seek to show how notions of identity, Europe, nations, etc. are invented solely in order to unmask the 'Grand Narratives' on Europeanisation. On the contrary, I adhere to Delanty's (2018) view: "… once this is done … there are other and more important objectives, which cannot be easily achieved by recourse to what are fairly simplistic and often polemical positions" (Delanty, 2018, p. ix). This position can lead to the view that identities and discourses should be seen as nothing but socially constructed concepts; also in the eyes of the social actors themselves. That would conflate an explanatory category, constructivism, with an empirical one, i.e. the interviews conducted with the social actors, as well as social actors' utterances in discourses. Needless to say, I do not consider identities to exist independently of discourses. Discourses are conceptualised as intermediating factors that contribute to the construction of identities (Archakis and Tsakona, 2012, p. 20). I seek to illuminate the ways in which the interviewees employ language to construct their narratives, e.g. whether and how they draw on essentialist, cultural, civic dimensions, or other dimensions in the social construction of identities. The aim is to identify situations in which constructions of identity vary between different analytical categories. This will clarify how competing ontologies on Europeanisation gain shape, and how they affect citizens' attachment to different sites in the world (Eisenstadt and Giesen, 1995, pp. 77–83; Eder, 2009, p. 430).

By subscribing to an ontological realism, I argue that social constructivism alone is not capable of demonstrating how structure is formed. We need to employ a macro-analysis of long-term societal trends affecting Europeanisation; how ideas and discourses become manifest in political, economic, cultural and social spheres. While I argue that our perception of reality is socially and collectively constructed and (re)produced, I do not refute that there is a reality 'out there.' The question is rather to what extent we have access to this reality, and how knowledge production within the social sciences relies on conventions of language (Kauppi, 2018, p. 194; Kratochwil, 2008, p. 82). I also employ an epistemological constructivism to construct intelligible concepts capturing macro-discourses, whereas the narrative analysis of the

interviews aims to delve into how agency is negotiated (Somers, 1994, p. 620). By deploying a constructivist epistemology, I conceive of science as a realm of practicability, where usefulness and novel generated insights are prioritised.

4. Data & Methodology

I now outline how I make use of various kinds of data, before moving on to an explanation of the methods applied. To answer the research questions, I employ qualitative materials stemming from both second- and first-hand sources, literature, articles and interviews.

One important distinction in the qualitative methods used is that between narratives and discourses – the latter is connected to the macro and the former to the micro level. They are, however, both conceptualised as 'social practices'[14] in which power relations and dominant ideologies can be unveiled (Archakis & Tsakona, 2012, p. 15). In short, I argue that the two methods complement each other when examining the creation of meaning as well as ideological practices and power relations.

Lastly, I shed light on why I opt for the semi-structured interview format, and how the interviews and transcriptions were conducted.

4.1. Qualitative Data

The conducted interviews are analysed in accordance with the methodological and theoretical framework on narrativisation and the formation of individual and collective identities. Having read the interviews in full several times looking for patterns and divergences, I have decided to present them in four narrative groups:

1. **The Political Struggle of the EU: Pro- and Anti-Narratives**
2. **The Young and Enthusiastic Europeans – Benefitting from the EU**
3. **The Danish-German Border Region – A Unique Relationship**
4. **Lampedusa – The Feeling of Abandonment**

To navigate among dominating discourses of Europeanisation, I deploy second-hand data from existing media outlets and academic literature through which knowledge and information are

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14 The definition of a social practice derives from critical discourse theory, and is defined as habitualised ways, tied to particular times and places, where people apply resources, materially or symbolically to act in the world (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 21).

channelled, collective interpretations promoted, and their validity contested. By scrutinising international news-media and political speeches, I have selected five different text materials, in which the authors attempt to represent particular social groups within the European social space. The focal point is to illustrate how their aims and purposes attempt to influence the evolution of Europeanisation (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 83).

4.2. Methods

4.2.1. Conceptualising Narratives

I discern between narratives and discourses as two distinct but highly interwoven social practices. Adhering to Critical Discourse Theory, denoted as CDA, and Somers' framework, I argue that the concept 'discourse' primarily refers to power and ideology,[15] whereas 'narratives' are seen as constitutive foundations for the creation of meaning, utilised as communicative means to organise and shape experiences for the construction of identities (Somers, 1994). Narratives are also capable of providing people with a meaning for their actions, although not necessarily in direct causal terms (Archakis & Tsakona, 2012, p. 3; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2001, p. 63). Furthermore, the social relations emerging within narratives vary in regard to the type of story being told (Eder, 2006, p. 256). I therefore invoke two concepts to examine how divergent narratives either seek to forge a stronger and more solidary Europe, or turn down cooperative actions by emphasising how the nation-state has been put at a disadvantage due to the European project. 'Fusion' refers to social relations that are (re)combined and subsequently circulating to produce different semantic noise, which in turn offer new options for the emergence of a post-national container for people in Europe. 'Fission' concerns negative feedback on European integration processes, leading to negative sentiments towards the EU (Eder, 2015, p. 273). Narratives must hereby fuse with a common system of meaning and expectations to become meaningful for the actors involved, which in turn can lead to social action. In the analysis, I attempt to illustrate how the interviewees feel attached, disinterested or unattached to features relating to Europe and the EU.

4.2.2. The Emergence of Identity Processes in Narratives

I conceive of identities as revolving around discourses that put values, convictions and ideologies into social circulation, contributing to shaping, defining and constraining individuals

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[15] I understand ideology as: "… a practice that operates in processes of meaning production in everyday life, whereby meaning is mobilised in order to maintain relations of power" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2001, p. 75).

(Archakis & Tsakona, 2012, p. 8). The dialectical relationship between agency and structure can be explicated by stating that social agents, to a certain extent, appear to be shaped by the direct and indirect impositions of dominating discourses, meaning that narratives and discourses are in a state of tension. However, social agents do have creative abilities at their disposal with which they can deconstruct and alter what might otherwise appear to be predetermined roles, identities and abilities (Archakis & Tsakona, 2012, p. 29). This is most conspicuously illustrated when social agents negotiate and give meaning to their multiple identities – in their narratives, they are in a more or less (un)conscious struggle with the categorisation processes that are imposed from above, contesting, resisting or aligning themselves with these impositions (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 24; Wodak & Meyer, 2009, pp. 11–12).

In conclusion, narrative analysis casts light on how identities are shaped and constituted by, on the one hand, homing in on macro-parameters, in the form of discourses that are considered the main vehicles of cultural values and ideological positions (i.e. intermediating factors). On the other hand, by exploring how micro-parameters, such as the interviewees' relational positioning to others, linguistic choices, and narrative performances, are enacted in the construction of their identities (Ibid., pp. 31–32). This enables us to grasp how narratives attain meaning in the process of managing differences and similarities stemming from experiences and mediated knowledge (Archakis & Tsakona, 2012, p. 40).

4.2.3. Conducting Discourse Analysis

By applying CDA, some justifications are needed, since CDA does not constitute a well-defined empirical method (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 28). Scholars deploying CDA usually examine opaque relationships of causality and determination among discursive practices, events and texts, and broader societal structures[16] (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2001, p. 63). With regard to the contested outcomes of Europeanisation, there is a clear incentive for applying CDA, as Wodak and Boukala (2015),[17] and Zappettini (2019)[18] amongst others have done.

CDA defines discourse as covering language, both written and spoken. The concept can be defined as: "… a particular perspective on these various forms of semiosis – it sees them as

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[16] When it comes to the explanation of change, it is considered significant to dissect the interactive dynamics of discussion and contestation in discourses, potentially leading to reconfigurations of what was previously deemed inconceivable (Crespy, 2015, p. 103).

[17] Wodak and Boukala (2015) applied CDA to analyse the many meanings of Europe in discourses and how the financial crisis in Europe since 2008 has led to the rise of Eurosceptic political ideologies (Wodak, Boukala, 2015, pp. 88-89).

[18] Zappettini (2019) focuses on the interaction between language and society. He applies a bottom-up and transnational perspective to examine processes of identity formation in discourses (Zappettini, 2019, p. 5).

moments of social practices in their articulation with other non-discursive moments" (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 41). The dialectical relationship between text and social practice is what determines whether society's dominating discourses are reproduced or challenged by the authors of the analysed empirical material (Ibid., p. 4). The models below demonstrate how the circular research process will enable me to answer the research questions, as well as how the analysed text material is linked to discursive practices (e.g. solidarity, equality, crisis discourses) relating to the overall macro-level the author aims to address.
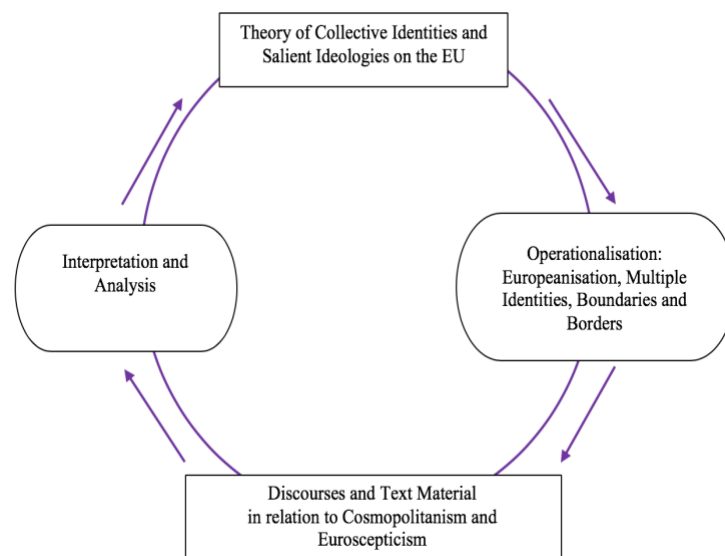
Research as a Circular Process
(adapted from Wodak, 2009)
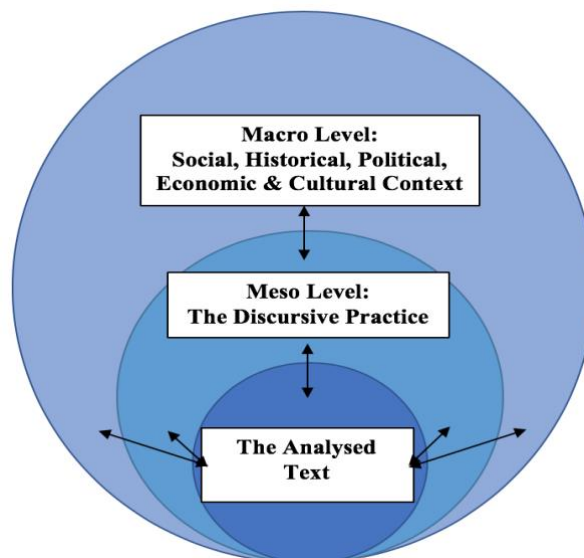
Discursive Model
(adapted from Zapettini, 2019)

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4.2.4. Limitations of the Selection of Texts

As I only deal with a limited number of texts, I am well aware of the ambiguity in demonstrating whether the text material I select and analyse reflects dominant discourses on Europeanisation. This also questions the extent to which the analysed discourses possess powerful communicative resources to maintain or change the social world of European citizens (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2001, pp. 89–90). Having said that, the criteria for the selection of particular news articles, political speeches, academic articles and books derived from my interest in collective identity formations, as well as how tensions between the local, national, European and global levels occur (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, pp. 13–14).

   The following outlines why I have decided to dissect divergent cosmopolitan and Eurosceptical currents, first conceptualised as two ideal types, whereupon they are employed with a heuristic purpose (Swedberg, 2018, pp. 184–189). Euroscepticism is chosen because it operates as a strategic driven ideology possessing critical stances towards how the EU functions, which in some instances also implies an advocation for increased autonomy to the nation-state. Cosmopolitanism advocates for a larger European responsibility in the world, and less focus on 'us' and 'them' distinctions. In a prolongation of CDA's emphasis on the dialectical relationship between discursive and non-discursive elements, Euroscepticism and cosmopolitanism are partly seen as ideas and discourses, but at the same time their material features become 'real' when they manifest themselves in our daily lives: in parliaments, on social media, in demonstrations, and so on (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 81).

4.2.5. Applied Concepts

I employ the following concepts to link the textual level to the discursive and macro level:[19] the 'communicative event' is an instance of conveying language, for instance in the form of interviews, articles, or political speeches (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 70). This is closely related to the term 'genre,' which is the type of language used in the performance of a particular social activity, i.e. the language used in newspaper articles, academic articles and literature, social media comments, and political speeches (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 56).

   'The order of discourse' is the sum of all genres and discourses within a given social domain. It is a system that shapes and is shaped by specific instances of language usage. This delimits what can be said, but at the same time social actors can attempt to change the order of discourse by using discourses and genres in novel manners (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 72).

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[19] This is due to the view that Europeanisation must be examined in the context of macro social, political and economic transformations (Zappetini, 2019, p. 9).

'Intertextuality' is applied to point out how texts on Europeanisation are linked to other texts, through explicit reference to a topic or actor, or references to events in the past and present.

'Interdiscursivity' is deployed to demonstrate how the discourses within the texts are linked to each other in different manners. For instance, discourses on Europeanisation can be related to discourses on nationalism, austerity politics, and the lack of legitimacy possessed by European institutions (Wodak, 2015, pp. 6–7). The analysis identifies genres, discourses and styles that are drawn upon so as to represent aspects of the social world in a given way (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012, p. 85). The concepts are mainly of use in terms of demonstrating the extent to which selected discourses either bring about continuity or change (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 74).

4.2.6. The Semi-Structured Interviews

With the semi-structured interview, I was in a position to have context-specific and nuanced dialogues with the interviewees. I could adjust the questions and specificities in accordance with the interviewee's background, and ask explorative and further expounding questions.[20]

I followed Bourdieu's (1999) interview advices, the most crucial aspect of which is to make explicit what I have been doing in terms of intentions and procedural principles (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 607). As Bourdieu puts great emphasis on not following rigid and strict methodological guidelines, I developed a written interview guide with open-ended questions (Ayres, 2008). The interview guides varied in relation to whether the questions were posed to movements and communities, or people residing in border regions (see Appendix A).

Overall, I was surprised by how well the majority of the interviews worked out, despite the lack of face to face contact. Telephone and Skype interviews may be considered a 'versatile' data collection tool. In terms of disadvantages, it would be worthwhile to consider how the lack of visual signs might lead to data loss or distortions[21] (Novick, 2008).

4.2.7. Selection of Interviewees

Two personal contacts living in Tønder put me in contact with two German high-school students, and two middle-aged Danish men. In terms of getting access to people on Lampedusa,

[20] It is worth mentioning that if Europe, or being European, were hardly mentioned, I attempted to ask the interviewees more directly about their attachments to Europe, and their thoughts about these attachments.
[21] In instances when the connection was bad, or when other interruptions occurred, I repeated the last question. Although some topics could have been discussed in greater depth, it aided the process to cover what was planned prior to the interview.

I used my own Italian network to get in contact with people on the island. The interviewees from political communities and movements were found through social media.

4.2.8. Presentation of Interviewees

Movements & Community	Profile
WeMoveEU (David, from Germany, in his thirties)	The community considers themselves to be an independent and value-based organisation. They aspire to build a European 'demos'
The European Movement in Denmark (Christian, from Denmark, in his thirties)	The movement defines themselves as a pro-European interest group. They work to bring out the EU discussion to Danes
European Youth International (Matej from Slovakia and Peter from Denmark, in their twenties)	They define themselves as a movement whose main purpose is to fight for a European future
The Popular Movement against the EU (Susanna, Danish-American, in her twenties)	The movement defines themselves as a movement fighting for a Danish withdrawal from the EU, and a better and more democratic cooperation with other countries

The Danish-German Border Region	Profile
Jakob (from Denmark, in his fifties)	Working as the finance director of Tønder Gymnasium. Crossing the border to Germany 3-4 times during the week
Claus (from Denmark, in his fifties)	Working for the Danish football association. Crossing the border to Germany 3-4 times during the week
Luc (from Germany, seventeen)	Living on the German island, Sylt. Crossing the border to Denmark every day. Enrolled at Tønder Gymnasium
Herle (from Germany, seventeen)	Living in the village, Humptrup, on the German side of the border. Crossing the border to Denmark every day. Enrolled at Tønder Gymnasium

Lampedusa	Profile
Paola (from Italy, in her fifties)	Working as a teacher for disabled people on Lampedusa and a volunteer for Forum Lampedusa Solidale. She came to the island 30 years ago
Rino (from Italy, in his seventies)	Working as a yoga instructor on Lampedusa. He came to the island 12 years ago when his daughter married a Lampedusan. Also a volunteer for Forum Lampedusa Solidale
Claudia (from Italy, in her twenties)	Working as the coordinator of Mediterranean Hope. She has been living for one year on the island and is in close contact with locals and disembarking migrants

4.2.9. Ethical Considerations and Interview Conduct

In agreement with all interviewees, I have left out their surnames. I treat ethics not as a 'static code' but a characteristic of the relation between myself and the interviewee[22] (Roth & Unger, 2018). Before the initiation of the interviews, I made sure that there was reciprocal agreement to record the interview before exchanging and negotiating meaning. I also promised the

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[22] I followed the Swedish Research Council's (2017) guiding principles in terms of reliability, honesty, respect and responsibility when speaking to the interviewees and storing their data.

interviewees that personal information would be kept confidential and that their data would be secured and only deployed in this thesis (Swedish Research Council, 2017, p. 41). To allay suspicion and scepticism on the part of the interviewees, I presented myself as a master's degree student of sociology writing my master's thesis on European identity. My performativity throughout the interviews revolved around attempting to maintain a high level of curiosity independently of the topic. The interviewees were neither averse to discuss epochal periods in their lives, nor to express political views.

4.2.10. Transcription, Analytical Strategy and Coding

As I conducted the interviews in three different languages (Danish, Italian and English), I decided to translate every interview into English, entailing that some meaning, potentially, will have been lost.

Generally, the transcriptions were made with the research questions in mind, meaning that superficial quotations and introductions were disregarded. I utilised the data analysis program Nvivo to process the data, looking for linkages and tendencies.

I followed Schmidt's (2004) analytical techniques for semi-structured interviews. The guiding principle was the interchange between the material and theoretical knowledge, comprising five stages: (i) in response to the gathered material, categories for the analysis are set up; (ii) these are brought together to be tested and revised; (iii) all interviews are coded according to the analytical categories; (iv) case overviews can be produced; and (v) the analytical stage can be initiated, where selected transcripts are (re)read and re-interpreted (Schmidt, 2004, pp. 253–257) (see Appendix B for all codes and excerpts).

4.2.11. Validity

By applying one or more epistemic regimes, diverse reflexive dilemmas are bound to occur. In other words, how can I have confidence in my analytical account of Europeanisation and the existence of a European identity? Here, it is worth mentioning that by deploying a qualitative approach, the outcomes will undoubtedly be less conclusive, more intuitive and less verifiable than statistical work (Duchesne et al., 2013, p. 195). The rationale for conducting the interviews is found in the conviction that they can reveal insights that would otherwise have remained hidden. Moreover, by deploying a constructivist epistemology, I acknowledge the limitations of analytic narratives in representing only snapshots of the interviewees' realities (Kratochwil, 2008, p. 91). At the same time, it is an inescapable fact that I as a researcher will become a co-

constructor of the social reality, i.e. I will decontextualise and re-contextualise discourses during the research process[23] (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012).

The fact that the informants were selected depending on my access to social networks may also call into question the study's generalisability. However, since I am interested in Europeans' lived experiences in specific areas (border zones), the twelve interviews can be considered sufficient for the purpose of this thesis, while still suffering constraints in terms of external validity.

5. Theory of Cosmopolitanism and Euroscepticism

I now introduce two ideal types, cosmopolitanism and Euroscepticism, employed with a heuristic purpose to examine different text materials and shed light on competing discourses within the field of Europeanisation. The reason for incorporating these two ideologies is due to the conviction that they represent different worldviews related to questions such as what Europe is and what it should aspire to be in social, cultural, economic and political terms.

5.1. Cosmopolitanism as Ideal Type

Beck and Grande (2007) emphasise that while nationalism's strategy for dealing with difference is constituted by an either/or logic, perceiving the nation as a unique, bounded and separate entity, cosmopolitanism operates with a both/and principle, where the vision is open, decentred, incomplete, and undefined. Cosmopolitanism adheres to a strong recognition of difference, universal norms and rights, equal treatment of others and a relativisation of one's own identity and culture (Beck & Grande, 2007, pp. 11–13; Delanty, 2018, p. 123). It not only contrasts with a normative orientation but also a section of political discourses (Beck & Grande, 2007; Delanty, 2005, pp. 415–416). Altogether, cosmopolitanism refers to a transformation of cultural and political subjectivities in encounters between different levels (i.e. local, national, European and global).

I deploy a critical version of cosmopolitanism that is empirically relevant and evaluative (Mau, Memes & Zimmerman, 2008, p. 4; Delanty, 2008). The focal point is how different social actors have perceived Europe's role and responsibility in light of the refugee crisis. To explore the degree to which various subject-positions within the media and political sphere possess cosmopolitan commitments, I analysed three different text materials in relation to political,

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[23] What Somers denotes as 'Conceptual Narrativity': "The concepts and explanations that we construct as social researchers" (Somers, 1994, p. 620).

cultural and ethical dimensions, paying particular attention to openness towards others, universal principles, economic and cultural consequences, hospitality and empathy. The three dimensions (political, cultural and ethical) were chosen because it is possible, as Delanty (2006) emphasises when discussing the genealogy of cosmopolitanism: "… to discern [in cosmopolitanism] … three broad strands … which can be divided for the purpose of illustration into strong and weak forms" (Delanty, 2006, p. 28). As cosmopolitanism can exist in various forms (Delanty, 2018, p. 132), I examine what the chosen text material reveals with regard to cosmopolitanism in contemporary Europe, in particular: how open and all-encompassing are the authors in their stances toward the 'other' (i.e. the migrant and refugee), and what does this reveal about which boundaries can be crossed, how and by whom?

5.2. Euroscepticism as Ideal Type

Politically, the financial and migration crises have led to an increasing attachment to EU-sceptic ideologies and political parties, where the rhetoric of 'exclusion' has become entrenched in populist and nationalistic discourses on national and European identity (Wodak and Salomi, 2015, p. 89; Caiani and Guerra, 2017, p. 266). Recent research has collected data on the evolution of Euroscepticism, illustrating how support for European far-right, far-left and other Eurosceptic parties has risen from 15% in 1992 to almost 35% in 2019 (Roodujin et al., 2019).

Scholars usually distinguish between 'hard' and 'soft' Euroscepticism. While the former refers to a principled opposition to the EU, calling for a rejection of European integration and a withdrawal from the EU,[24] the latter entails concerns over particular policy areas, when national interests are at odds with the political trajectory of the EU, and how the EU functions (e.g. in terms of its transparency, democracy, accountability, etc.) (Belloni, 2016, p. 532; Caiani & Guerra, 2017, p. 4). Scholars have criticised the distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' Euroscepticism for being too vague (Biijsmans, 2020; Guerra, 2017). The soft version is considered too broad and does not include a 'Euroneutral' category, taking heed of actors expressing no thoughts or interest in the EU.[25] Another category, 'Euroalternativism,' is seen as a pro-systemic opposition advocating for a process of Europeanisation from below, supported by social movements, bringing democracy, accountability and transparency to the fore (Caiani and Guerra, 2017, p. 263).

Overall, Euroscepticism is considered to be ideologically and strategically driven – it can be part of an ideological position, or utilised as a strategic means to increase the political influence

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[24] The outcome of the Brexit referendum in 2016 reflects this attitude.
[25] Other propositions are 'angry' and 'passive' forms of Euroscepticism (Guerra, 2017, pp. 27-32).

of political parties or social actors (Ozlem & Ornek, 2015, p. 51). Euroscepticism hereby does not pertain to a wholly negative view of the EU (Bijsmans, 2020, pp. 2–3), but rather a quality of discourse assessing the worth of European integration (Trenz & de Wilde, 2009, pp. 2–3). This also entails the possibility of possessing Eurosceptic views while adhering to some of cosmopolitanism's main principles and vice-versa. To study the shape of Euroscepticism, we need to pay attention to the context in which Euroscepticism arises, what it represents, how it is performed, and to what degree it attempts to change the current order of discourse (Caiani & Guerra 2017, p. 271; Trenz & de Wilde, 2009, pp. 2–3).

6. Theory of Collective Identities

I now outline how I conceive of collective identities and how I will elucidate the existence of a European collective identity at the micro and macro level.

6.1. Introducing Collective Identities

Collective identities refer to attributes that are based on group differences and similarities, e.g. gender, social class, ethnicity, and nationality (Kuhn & Nicoli, 2020, p. 5). By collective identity, I refer to when a collective of people – whether a small or large group, varying from local communities to nations, or even groups across the EU's member states – succeeds in defining itself vis-à-vis other groups by attributing meaning to itself (Eder, 2009, p. 428; Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2015, p. 121).

I deploy a processual approach, inspired by the Italian sociologist, Alberto Melucci, whose approach to collective identities stresses how social actors produce collective meaning and action through interaction and (re)negotiation, as well as the opposition of different orientations. Social actors contribute to the formation of a 'we' by adjusting three orders of orientation: the ends of the action, the means of the action, and the social dimension, in the form of social actors' relationship to their environment (Melucci, 1995, pp. 41–46).

6.2. The Existence of a Collective European Identity

When it comes to the idea of a collective European identity, the most frequently recurring point of reference relates to whether it exists, has ever existed, and in what form. Also, whether we should conceptualise it in the same way as national identities or as an 'umbrella' type of a secondary political identity bringing divergent national identities with common attributes

together, i.e. within a geographical territory and a certain European culture[26] (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2015, p. 9).

Collective identities are considered decisive for social cohesion in societies because they provide a sense of belonging. Following evolutionary theory, the more a community is based on a complex web of indirect social relations, the more this community relies on generalised forms of recognising the unknown 'other' as a particular 'other.' While tribes or simple communities can live with the group idea that identifies with a community of 'concrete' people, embodied by what Durkheim would denote as a 'mechanic' form of solidarity, national and European communities are based and dependent on, indirect forms of reciprocity amongst its members to engender solidarity; building relationships of trust, common attachment, toleration, understanding and obligations (Trenz, 2016, p. 8). This is the nub when it comes to why a European society is in need of a collective identity (Eder, 2005, pp. 205–212).

Relating this outline to the European social space, it is necessary to highlight the distinction between national and European identity (Kohli, 2000, pp. 113-117). The foundation stones of a collective European identity are different from national identities, as they, in the course of history, have succeeded in imposing themselves as 'hegemonic' identities in territorially bounded political communities (Eder, 2009, p. 432). As an analogue to Benedict Anderson and his well-known concept of 'imagined community' in relation to the rise of the nation-state in the 19th century, which he defined as a political community that is both inherently limited and sovereign[27] Anderson, 2005, p. 6; Giesen, 2003, p. 26), a collective European identity will most likely emerge and evolve differently, necessitating another theoretical framework. This has also to do with the fact that national identities[28] are often ethnic in their orientation, built on myths and symbols, or civic, in terms of a political structure comprising only one economic and political system (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2015, p. 125; Segatti & Westle, 2016, p. 16; Eder, 2005, p. 210). Although there is a general lack of populist connotations when it comes to a European identity, we still need to bear in mind that nation-states are becoming ever more pluralised, and therefore also open to new imaginaries regarding people's identity (Delanty & Rumford, 2005, p. 88).

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[26] Other questions concern to what extent a European identity is capable of embracing cultural diversity and democratic inclusive politics, in particular when related to the integration and assimilation of migrants and minorities (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2015, p. 118).

[27] The limits point to the centrality of boundaries in the founding anthropological work on identity, whereas sovereignty reminds us of the specific nature of nations as political communities (Duchesne, 2008, p. 9).

[28] In his paper on national identities and European unity, Anthony D. Smith (1992) highlights how national identifications possess distinct advantages over the idea of a unified European identity. They are more vivid, accessible, well established and long popularised (Smith, 1992, p. 62).

6.3. Conceptualising a Collective European Identity

Taking the previous sections into consideration, we cannot conceptualise European identity in terms of the 'international' and 'supranational' level because they are state-centred concepts (Beck & Grande, 2007, p. 113). Therefore, I apply the concept of 'transnational' Europeanisation (Beck & Grande, 2007, p. 98). What is particular about transnationalism is that it is based on networks of groups that interact across national borders, capable of creating a unity out of increasing diversity. Moreover, while the international and supranational levels assume a core substance in the definition of a European identity, transnationalism includes cleavages and unbridgeable differences in emerging discourses and narratives. European identity is hereby thought of as a combination of divergent narratives that continuously produce a dynamic form of collective identity comprising tensions and contradictions (Eder, 2009, pp. 441–442).

6.4. The Study of Collective Identities

In this study, I am aware that I impute stable meaning to a concept that is in a constant state of flux and contingency (Delanty & Rumford, 2005, p. 53); examining how identity markers emerge in social processes, situated in space and time, necessitates acknowledgement that the findings are stable only while I am looking at them (Eder and Spohn, 2005, p. 211). Collective identities can only be studied on an individual level, i.e. through the lens of interviews or discourses (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2015, p. 123). Overall, proposals on European identity are treated as discursive constructions of boundaries that utilise 'objective referents' as signifiers, which are put together into a meaningful whole (Eder, 2006, p. 256).

Four main characteristics determine how I conceptualise identity constructions:

1. Social Actions Identity arises in relation to social action and is socially constructed and processual (Eisenstadt & Giesen, 1995, p. 74). It is contingent and volatile and therefore highly context-dependent.

2. Temporality Identities have a narrative dimension. When it comes to temporal aspects, memory and forgetting play a crucial part. This relates to the collective memory of Europe's past, which is seen as part of the constant re-evaluation that influences the 'we' as Europeans, and the 'them' as others emerging in present and future-oriented discourses and narratives. Collective identity constructions forge commonness and difference in terms of how the past is (re)constructed amongst people (Eder, 2005, pp. 202-211).

3. Boundaries & Relationality ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	Identity exists insofar as there is a social relation between the self and other by which the self is constituted through symbolic boundaries. Identities are based on differences and similarities, and are relational, implying that there is a degree of reflexivity involved when social actors construct their identities in relation to others. Boundaries are negotiable and can separate or unite processes of interactions and social relationships by establishing or decompose a line of demarcation between inside and outside, strangers and familiars, friends and foes etc. (Eisenstadt and Giesen, 1995, p. 74). The analytical interest resides in how strong and rigid the boundaries are, the degree of porousness, and the possibilities of cross-cutting them.
4. Multiplicity ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●	Collective and personal identities do not exist in a zero-sum relation. They appear as overlapping, cross-cutting, hybrid or co-existing. Different types of identities, e.g. ethnic, regional, political, national etc. exist at the same time and can thus be drawn upon so as to represent oneself in a given moment of time (Delanty & Rumford, 2005, p. 52). This entails that collective identities can vary in combinations, and are of different salience in one's life depending on the primacy of a given element, e.g. objective elements such as how important this identity is for one's social, political and economic life, and subjective elements regarding how important an individual feels this or that identity is to him or her (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2015, p. 121).

6.5. Summary

It is important to point out that a European identity can exist on different levels, be it personal, regional, national or collective, and is just one identity amongst others. Moreover, European identity should not necessarily be seen as synonymous with support for European integration. People may identify themselves as Europeans while simultaneously not subscribing to European integration or particular policies deriving from European institutions; people may also feel European without relating it to the EU in any way (Eder, 2009, p. 56; Burgoon, Kuhn and Nicoli, 2020, p. 79). Collective identities can also generally be discerned amongst social, cultural and political characteristics depending on the type of features referred to, and the groups to which they are attributed (Gropas and Triandafyllidou, 2015, p. 122).

7. Analysis

In the analysis, I offer a brief historical overview before presenting the discourse and narrative analysis. After each section, core arguments and findings will be presented.

The first part comprises a brief historical overview of European turning-points to demonstrate the current situation in a broader perspective. In the following section, I introduce the discourse analysis, focusing on two specific branches: cosmopolitanism and Euroscepticism.

The narrative analysis consists of four narratives regarding how Europe and the EU are conceived, and what these differing conceptions reveal in relation to a European identity.

Lastly, I situate the preceding analysis with a complementary discussion on overall findings and relates it to how the EU, in the aftermath of the corona crisis, is facing a momentous crossroad that may come to define the future of Europe.

7.1. Historical Overview

7.1.1. A War-Torn Past

Until the outbreak of World War I, Europe had been a pioneer when it came to the ideas and ideals of a civilisation claiming to be European [29] (Delanty & Rumford, 2005, pp. 28-29). However, in the aftermath of the war, Europe faced a comprehensive crisis in terms of its self-understanding (Kaelble, 2006, p. 22). In this period, it became increasingly clear that crucial parts of European economic, political, and cultural power were vanishing (Ibid., p. 23). Later, the humanitarian shocks of World War II prompted a sharp fall in European living standards. Nonetheless, amidst this deep crisis, a small number of European writers began identifying themselves with Europe.[30] Despite the vagueness of this identification, it was a sign of a European sense of belonging, albeit confined to a minority of writers and intellectuals.

7.1.2. The Emergence of the European Coal and Steel Community

Immediately after the end of WWII, global political projects surfaced, engendering mutual bonds to secure a peaceful world order. In 1945, fifty-one countries gathered in San Francisco to sign a document that formed the foundation of the United Nations (UN). Nevertheless, it was only in the 1950s that a European political community gradually surfaced (Kaelble, 2006, p. 27). In 1951, the Treaty of Paris led to the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community.[31] Besides for purposes of economic cooperation, the official history of the EU emphasises that the leaders were motivated by the ideal of one peaceful, united, and prosperous Europe; a heroic narrative rooted in the trauma of two world conflicts. In hindsight, it comes as no surprise that the post-war impetus behind the process could be linked to a transnational elite that desired to bring about a novel political project (Cedric, 2014, pp. 37–38). However, as the main interest resided in economic prosperity and the avoidance of war, identity questions and how to forge

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[29] The Enlightenment period embodied the process of modernisation and rationalisation; a movement of intellectuals that transcended territorial boundaries, aiming at a universal community of mankind. This Eurocentric view was symbolised by a belief that everybody's true identity was European (Giesen, 2003, p. 31).

[30] The most conspicuous example was the French writer, Simone de Beauvoir, who in 1946 on a visit to the US, made it clear that, according to her, children of the European continent are of the same birthplace (Kaelble, 2006, p. 24).

[31] This is what Delanty (2018) describes as: "… one of the most significant experiments in statehood and in the articulation of normative ideas of a post-national political community" (Delanty, 2018, p. 300).

mutual solidarity amongst members-states and their citizens were widely overlooked (Delanty & Rumford 2005, p. 29).

7.1.3. Introducing European Identity and the Establishment of the European Union

In 1973, the first enlargement of the European Communities (EC) took place. It was also the very first time that a European identity was introduced32 (Outhwaite, 2008, p. 130). Nonetheless, it was not until after four additional countries had joined, in 1981 and 1986, that the European people started recognising another political actor besides nation-states. The European self-understanding had also changed its focus, from cultural and social values to politics. Europe's political aims at this time were concerned with the stabilisation of democracy and peace, especially after the outbreak of the Cold War. Furthermore, increasing European integration was sought to improve migration within Europe, by establishing free trade markets and reducing border control. In 1992, after the Maastricht treaty was signed, the European Union came into existence. Since the 1980s there had been attempts to establish and promote European symbols to invoke a growing awareness of the Union: the European flag, day, anthem, passport, etc. These symbols illustrate how the second half of the twentieth century in Europe was dominated by economic prosperity, individual experiences of travelling in Europe, democratic values and mass consumerism, embodying the era of the 'permissive consensus' in European politics (Kaelble, 2006, pp. 25–27).

7.1.4. The European Union in Contemporary Times

Since the eastern enlargement in 2004, the EU has expanded further by accepting new countries; this has meant that the borders and boundaries of the European Union have been re-drawn into a new and unprecedented version (Delanty and Rumford, 2005, p. 49). While the beginning of the new millennium induced enthusiasm for the European project, the rejection of the Constitutional Treaty by the Dutch and French in 2005 caused uncertainty for the European project (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2015, pp. 16–17). The new reality was met by an increasing scepticism towards the political project, prompting support for nationalistic and populist parties with a Eurosceptic agenda (Favell, 2017). Moreover, as the memory of WWII has grown more distant to the majority of European citizens, the underlying justifications of the project have

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32 The Nine Member Countries of the European Communities have decided that the time has come to draw up a document on European Identity. This will enable them to achieve a better definition of their relations with other countries and of their responsibilities and the place which they occupy in world affairs. They have decided to define European identity with the dynamic nature of the Community in mind. (Bulletin of the European Communities, 1973, pp. 118-122).

become increasingly contested in the media and politics (Delanty & Rumford, 2005, p. 78). The political and institutional crisis was not helped by the global financial crisis in 2008, followed by the Greek debt crisis, during which the foundations of the Eurozone countries were severely questioned (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2015, p. 17). European solidarity was a persistent theme entering the debate, since it was unclear how the EU and its member states were going to help the Greeks (Guiraudon, Ruzz & Trenz, 2005, pp. 1–7).

The emergence of the refugee crisis was another epochal event, causing contestation amongst European member states when deciding on the distribution of migrants and refugees. The south of Europe in particular has been inordinately exposed due its geographic location, whilst north and central European countries have had a greater scope in terms of deciding how many migrants and refugees to accommodate (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2015, p. 172).

7.1.5. *The Unforeseeable Future*

Most recently, Brexit and the coronavirus pandemic have not improved the current state of the EU's comprehensive issues. Brexit only fanned the flames for an increasing attachment to Eurosceptical political parties, although European citizens are now witnessing the legal complexities of an official withdrawal from the European Union. The corona crisis was another spark, igniting fierce discussions over the EU's lack of solidarity with countries being severely exposed (Vallée, 2020). According to Delanty, Brexit was a cleavage that could be described as one between nationals and cosmopolitans; an expression of socio-cultural and economic changes in the context of globalisation. However, what he emphasises as even more important in the context of the current state and the existence of a collective European identity is the absence of a transnational political movement to mediate and translate the different positions existing within Europe. This clarifies how it has predominantly been the populist and nationalistic right,[33] with a Eurosceptical agenda, that has been able to mobilise the power of democracy to cause changes (Delanty, 2018, pp. 260-270).

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[33]While nationalism has been flourishing as people have felt threatened by international forces, populism's mobilising force has emanated from people's feeling of being betrayed by the so-called elite (Calhoun, 2017, p. 63).

8. The Discourse Analysis

8.1. Cosmopolitanism

I now proceed to the discourse analysis. Regarding cosmopolitanism, I examine an opinion piece published in *The Guardian* by the French journalist, Natalie Nougayrède, titled *Diversity could be the making of Europe – let's talk about it?* (January, 2016). Politically, I home in on the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyden's, agenda *A Union that strives for more (2019–2024).* And ethically, I analyse an opinion piece written by Jaafar Abdul Karim, published in the international-oriented German newspaper, *Deutsche Welle*, titled *Europe has lost its soul at the border* (March, 2020).

8.1.1. Cultural Commitments – Accommodating Diversity

The first article deals with the cultural composition of Europe, in regard to which Nougayrède's visionary stances operate to promote the idea of a Europe built on ever more cultural diversity. The title *Diversity could be the making of Europe* is indicative of how Nougayrède conceives Europe as being in a state of continuous evolution, necessitating a: "… cool-headed debate about our collective identity" (Nougayrède, 2016) in relation to the refugee crisis.

The communicative event is an opinion piece written as a reflection containing clear subjective opinions regarding how to accommodate migrants and refugees; Nougayrède expresses her standpoints as a journalist and European citizen. In general, the language is characterised by a reflexive and encouraging intonation, embodying positive stances towards integration, inclusion and the 'other' arriving in Europe. The journalist employs a high level of intertextuality, exemplified by the way in which she draws attention to previous historical turning-points and quotes from politicians. This situates the condition of contemporary Europe and underlines that it is possible to accommodate refugees and migrants, as it is: "… worth remembering that we have been here before" (Nougayrède, 2016). This clarifies how Nougayrède considers Europe, as an open entity towards the external world, a view wherein movement to and from Europe is one of its historical attributes.

Nougayrède draws clear connections between different levels as a way of challenging prevailing discourses on diversity in Europe. She constructs a 'counter-narrative' through her subject-position as a journalist writing features and opinion pieces for an international newspaper. The text is allegedly addressed to international-oriented readers with an interest in the evolution of Europe. Nougayrède's aim is to call for a more solidary-oriented 'diversity discourse,' since diversity is not the problem but potentially the 'solution,' to which her

normative ideal is: "… to accept difference while upholding democratic governance and social standards" (Nougayrède, 2016). Nougayrède adheres to some of the main principles of cosmopolitanism – otherness, equality and universal norms and rights – clarifying her positioning as a 'world-citizen' caring about: "… people who are being driven to Europe" (Nougayrède, 2016).

To challenge the current order of discourse, she makes use of a high level of interdiscursivity, calling attention to discourses dominated by paranoia (e.g. an obsession with security: "… the xenophobic rush to put up fences and push families away with police dogs and truncheons"), as well as politicians' articulations and decisions: "Nicolas Sarkozy said his "Christmas Wish" to fellow French people was that they would "remain French" – as if that identity was under threat" (Nougayrède, 2016). This accentuates the present fear of the 'other,' i.e. the migrant and refugee, which politicians can use to gain power in juxtaposing with terrorism. In terms of power, this can be utilised as a means to attain a political end, or to maintain distinctions between 'them' and 'us.' Upholding the boundaries serves as a scare campaign, indicating that if the EU does not close its external borders, a 'certain way of life' will disappear. To counter these tendencies, Nougayrède draws on existing discourses in novel ways and emphasises that if democracies are to: "… resist populist pressures or social disintegration" there needs to be launched a: "… pan European-citizens' debate on diversity" (Nougayrède, 2016). The responsibility is placed on the shoulders of European civil society, in the form of transnational movements, online platforms and media organisations, which are the main social practices she encourages to forge a 'promising and dynamic' debate, capable of de-constructing: "… the fears that can arise from ignorance or stereotyping" (Nougayrède, 2016).

Nougayrède's visions precipitate an awareness of how European citizens can overcome social and symbolic boundaries existing between 'us-and-them' distinctions. The antidote is to be found in the sharing of experiences and life stories, de-mystifying the irrational perception of threats sweeping through Europe, suggesting a potential for change, insofar as European citizens and politicians start participating in an open-minded transformation of the European story we are all about to write.

8.1.2. Political Commitments – A Europe for Europeans and 'Eligible' Refugees

A Union that strives for more (2019–2024) was published when Ursula von der Leyden was running for the presidency of the European Commission. Since she was one of the main candidates, possessing a strong subject-position in the discursive and political field, I find it relevant to dissect one of her six chapters: *Protecting our European way of life*.

From the very beginning, Leyden employs a determined and concise language to introduce what she considers to be Europe's core attributes with regard to previous and future generations: from Europe as an aspiration of peace, to a Europe of peace, prosperity and unity, to a Europe which in contemporary times should be a society: "… where you can be who you are, live where you like, love who you want and aim as high as you want" (Leyden, 2019). She applies a degree of intertextuality to forge an awareness of different historical transitions, utilised to clarify her interest in setting high goals for Europe's upcoming five years. To fulfil this normative ideal: "… we must rediscover our unity and inner strength" (Leyden, 2019), accentuating how, in her conception of it, Europe is facing a 'more unsettled' period of time, demanding action. Henceforth, Leyden attempts to construct a determined 'political-action-narrative' in which she, through her subject-position, will provide the right political answers to maintain a Union built on equality, tolerance and fairness – Europe's responsibility lies in being the main protagonist for the creation of a 'better world.'

When it comes to the refugee crisis, Leyden recognises that it is a complex issue containing different interests but: "We can only have stable external borders if we give enough help to Member States facing the most pressure because of their place on the map" (Leyden, 2019). In this way, Leyden underlines the unequal distribution of migrants and refugees in Europe, and calls for solidarity and cooperation amongst the member states to find a permanent solution. The main proposal is found in the need to reinforce the European Border and Coast Guard agency to reach 10,000 Frontex border guards in 2024. This will enable the Union to return to 'strong borders and a fresh start on migration,' bringing prosperity, security and freedom back. Leyden is not hiding the fact that the high influxes of migrants, according to her political beliefs, constitute a real socio-cultural and economic threat to prosperity and cohesion within the European Union, legitimising the implementation of strong external borders. This demonstrates Leyden's way of being a political pragmatist seeking to satisfy diverse opinions on migration within the Union, and thereby enhancing her chances of being elected.

Leyden, in her position as the 'European judge,' does not fail to emphasise that European responsibility and morality ought to comprise more: "People do not choose lightly to leave their homes and take a perilous journey. They do so because they feel they have no alternative" (Leyden, 2019). Although Leyden recognizes the reasons causing migrants and refugees to flee, she is mostly concerned with how to disrupt the business of 'unscrupulous smugglers' and to improve the perspectives of young people in their home countries. The main cosmopolitan current is found in different kinds of investment, causing migrants and refugees to reconsider their journey towards Europe. This brings the kernel of the matter to the fore, namely: who is

allowed to enter European borders? According to Leyden, there ought to be clear dividing lines, i.e. between a Europe that will help saving lives at sea and refugees fleeing persecution and conflict because it is a 'moral duty,' and a Europe with a clear manual in terms of acting when it comes to those who are considered the 'non-eligibles.'

Leyden's political-action-narrative is hereby selective by involving a categorisation procedure, i.e. who is allowed to enter Europe and who is not, disregarding the need to treat all people equally and in possession of the same rights. Her apparent power lies in making and maintaining the distinction between European citizens, who belong to the 'us' category, eligible refugees potentially coming to belong to 'us,' and the non-eligible migrants, forced to remain in the position as 'them.' This demonstrates her political pragmatism and posturing as the 'protector' of Europeans. Her salient power resides in setting a clear line of demarcation: what Europe can cope with in terms of handling influxes of migrants and refugees, but also the underlying need to maintain the social and cultural boundaries between Europeans, refugees and migrants, insofar as Europe wants to remain a 'unique aspiration.'

8.1.3. Ethical Commitments – What Happened to the European Values?

The final article under examination in this section reflects the opinion of the German–Lebanese journalist, Jaafar Abdul Karim, who defines himself as a cosmopolitan citizen. Born in Liberia, raised in Lebanon and Switzerland, and now living in Berlin with German citizenship, Karim's opinion piece is pertinent when delving into the role he ascribes to the EU's ethical responsibility. His subjective stance is found in the assertion that Europe is about to lose its soul if it continues to treat refugees and migrants in an inhumane way.

Karim visited the Turkish–Greek border in March 2020 and posed the question: What happened to Europe's cherished human rights? Since the article was published in the international newspaper, *Die Welle*, Karim is addressing European citizens with an interest in refugees and migrants' conditions alongside Europe's external borders.

Karim deploys a high level of interdiscursivity. He draws attention to particular discourses encompassing European solidarity, humanity and tolerance; his accentuation of core European values. This is done with reference to epoch-making events in European history, for example the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to the EU in 2012, embodying its adherence to human rights and dignity.

Karim directs his main concern towards European politicians capable of changing the current inhumane agenda, pointing out that the anti-immigration ideology of Europe's far right will achieve more popularity if European and national politicians do not stand up for human values.

To challenge the current inhumane discourses, dominated by 'crisis labelling,' Karim makes use of observations from his trip to construct a 'humanitarian narrative,' asking whether the EU wants to represent the following actions: "Firing tear gas at children and infants … beating them … forcing them back to Turkey" (Karim, 2020). When juxtaposed with the description: "All I see are desperate, freezing, poor, hungry people, who left their home countries in search of a better life" (Karim, 2020), it becomes evident that the European perception of refugees as a threat, according to Karim, is built on ignorance and a loss of being able to fully understand 'the other' fleeing war and despotism, leading to the question: "How can a few thousand people on Europe's doorstep let us ignore or forget the values we supposedly hold so dear?" (Karim, 2020). To Karim, human dignity and rights necessitate the crossing of social and symbolic boundaries whenever the situation demands it. Thus, a truly cosmopolitan Europe does not question the arrival of refugees and migrants at the Greek border. Instead, the EU ought to open up its borders to fulfil the principle of cosmopolitan justice: "We could someday find ourselves in their desperate situation – so why are we not helping them?" (Karim, 2020).

8.1.4. Exploring Cosmopolitan Commitments

Having examined the selected text materials, it becomes evident that clear distinctions are found among the three authors' cosmopolitan commitments. Leyden is taking on a pragmatic political posturing, enabling her to convince the European parliament to select her as the upcoming president. In contrast with Leyden, Nougayrède and Karim's visionary stances attempt to challenge populist and nationalistic-oriented discourses that have obtained power. In Nougayrède's case, the arrival of migrants and refugees is considered an opportunity to enhance the existing cultural diversity, while Karim puts great emphasis on the need to stand up for human values and thereby open the borders to migrants and refugees.

The three texts also illustrate how Europe and the EU can be treated as 'floating signifiers', to which the authors, depending on their purpose and aim, can impute various meanings. While Leyden highlights the fact that Europe needs to be a unique aspiration, Karim and Nougayrède frame Europe as a safeguard of humanity and cultural diversity.

In terms of encouragement to take action, the three texts demonstrate how the political and human assessment of 'threat' and 'crisis' determine the means needed for resolving Europe's contemporary situation, i.e. strong external borders versus open borders. Political anxieties regarding migration appear to lead to an increasing fear of 'the other'. Moreover, the texts demonstrate that while borders can exclude, they can also imply gateways through which migrants and refugees can be welcomed (Davey, 2020, p. 95). Leyden acknowledges Europe's

responsibility in the world, but remains selective when the question touches upon who is allowed to enter. She subscribes to a European form of cosmopolitanism possessing an internal and external dimension, to which the former is prioritised; the primary goal is peace and security rather than 'global distributive justice' (Kamminga, 2017, p. 2). Although Europe wants to be the protagonist of peace and a better world, migrants and refugees can come to encounter what is figuratively described as 'Fortress Europe' (Ibid., p. 7).

In light of their different subjects, the authors appear to embody what Delanty (2018) and Kamminga (2017) define as 'weak' and 'strong' versions of cosmopolitanism. The former comprises a concern for all human beings, without necessarily leading to any concrete actions, whereas the latter requires equal treatment of all, which can be translated into an active response to migrants and refugees' claims for aid when arriving in Europe (Ibid., p. 28; Delanty, 2018, p. 132). The strong version of cosmopolitanism adheres to openness, as well as self- and societal transformation (Delanty, 2006, p. 36) – attributes found in Nougayrède and Karim's opinion pieces; meanwhile, Leyden's weak cosmopolitan agenda appears less open to a European transformation.

8.2. Euroscepticism

I now dissect one 'soft alternative' and one 'hard' version of Euroscepticism. The soft alternative version is the opinion piece *Europe has failed us. It is time to create a European republic* (May, 2020) by the founder of the movement, European Alternatives, the Italian philosopher Lorenzo Marsili, co-authored by the director of the European Democracy Lab, Professor Ulrike Guérot. The hard version consists of a political speech given by the Dutch politician, Geert Wilders, one month before the European election in May 2019.

8.2.1. 'Soft-Alternative' Euroscepticism – A Moment to Seize for European Citizens

Marsili and Guérot's article is chosen because their research fields and knowledge interests belong to the evolution of Europe. Their opinion piece constitutes a transformative vision, since they desire to bring about a radical change in the EU, from a fallible elite construction to a European republic.

Marsili and Guérot address Europeans as fellow citizens pursuing a more 'united and equal' Europe. As their explicit aim lies in transforming the EU into a European republic, their posturing as 'neutral' scholars is put aside. Nonetheless, they make extensive use of their subject

positions as intellectuals, in the possession of strong communicative resources, to enhance and legitimise their political vision for Europe.

Their narrative is a 'reactive political manifesto' against the fallible political system, entailing a strong utopian vision (i.e. the need for a peaceful second revolution). Epitomised by uplifting language, they incorporate historical and political moments to underline that Europe is at a crossroads between unity or divisive nationalism. The main social group addressed is European citizens, who, allegedly, lack trust and belief in the political elite.

It is no coincidence that Marsili and Guérot published the article after May 9, a day devoted to the EU's launching of the future of Europe after Brexit: "… a spectacle with top down chatter without vision or ambition" now postponed due to the corona crisis. Thus, the authors exploit the current standstill as a communicative event to urge citizens to: "… build a democracy of equals who share the same protections" (Marsili & Guérot, 2020).

The authors point out that the corona crisis is yet another illustration of how internal cleavages continue to become manifest in Europe, i.e. between east and west on democracy, and between north and south on economic solidarity, providing the authors with an opportunity to imagine another Europe, one with equal social protections for its citizens, paying the same amount of taxes, and having equal access to welfare. This imaginative aspiration is contrasted with a political elite that has been incapable of solving crises, paving the way for a re-nationalization of politics and a path of disintegration which: "… is drawing Europeans further apart and not closer together" (Marsili & Guérot, 2020).

To challenge the current order of crisis discourses, Marsili and Guérot employ a high level of intertextuality, rendered visible by the way in which they draw attention to particular moments and protagonists. These 'watershed moments' serve to remind European citizens that there is an alternative to the present divisive conditions: "In 1933 … the French writer, Julien Benda, wrote his discourse to the European Nation, urging Europeans to come together around their shared universalist values against the rising monsters of nationalism" and: "… it was against the background of a continent in ruins that Churchill spoke of a 'United States of Europe' in 1946" (Marsili & Guérot, 2020). The formation of these ideas have kept 'Europe's flame' alive – a symbol of European unity that is in danger of being extinguished by nationalistic discourses promoting nation-first politics.

To come up with a visionary political alternative to the elite construction, Marsili and Guérot place the greater part of responsibility on the shoulders of Europeans, because: "… emperors cannot produce Europe – only citizens can" (Marsili & Guérot, 2020). This clarifies how the authors juxtapose the past's emperors with a political elite serving their own interests, while

indicating that a European unity can only be viable as long as the voices of its citizens are heard. The authors believe that a united and equal Europe can be achieved once the EU has been transformed into a republic, built on the same foundation stones as nations: "A nation is a law that establishes a group of equals boasting common rights" (Marsili & Guérot, 2020). By adhering to this conviction, they disregard the importance of culture, ethnicity, language and identity in the formation of a collective 'we.' Instead, European citizens should be collectively aware of their social and economic interdependency and: "… transform this interdependence into collective control" (Marsili & Guérot, 2020). Once this is done, the authors believe that a European republic, capable of coping with the multiplicity of global challenges, and a Europe where a Bulgarian, German and Italian can enjoy the same social protections and economic support, will be able to emerge and thus turn the now inconceivable into the conceivable, because Europe: "… is a continent that time and again has shown that citizens' power can make the impossible possible" (Marsili & Guérot, 2020).

8.2.2. 'Hard Euroscepticism' – Europe and the Nation-state in Danger

Geert Wilders' speech, given in Prague 2019, represents the political agenda of a far-right party whose greatest aim lies in dissolving the EU to make nation-states sovereign again. Wilders was invited to Prague before the European election by the far-right coalition of political parties, Movement of Europe of Nations and Freedom (MENF). Although the event was framed as an occasion to stand up for 'freedom and sovereignty,' it was undoubtedly connected to the political campaign prior to the European election.

   The speech is considered germane as it contains clear traits of 'hard Euroscepticism,' while depicting how different entities, discursively, are framed and given particular attributes when drawing the line between the good 'us,' i.e. the freedom fighters, patriots, friends, the people against 'them', i.e. Muslims destroying our identity, and the EU as an undemocratic super-state. Throughout the speech, Wilders deliberately constructs distinct boundaries in relation to the presence of an evil 'otherness' that is putting European nation-states in danger. These boundaries are supposed to amplify differences between 'us' and 'them,' whereby Wilders' aim lies in accentuating the inherent superiority of the 'real people' in comparison with Muslims' inferiority.

   Wilder's language usage is characterised by a political rhetoric seeking to excite the crowd; catchphrases such as 'they take away our sovereignty' and 'we will never surrender' prompt applause and the shouting of slogans.

The speech is 'reactive' in the sense that Wilders seeks to forge a narrative in which the EU is blamed for furnishing an 'Islamization of Europe,' which, if not prevented, will cause 'radical changes' in the demography of Europe.34 This stands in clear contrast to how Wilders portrays himself and his fellow 'brave leaders' (i.e. Marie le Pen and Matteo Salvini), as the saviours of a Europe that is standing on 'the brink of cultural suicide.' These leaders are portrayed as the only 'real' representatives of the people; meanwhile the EU and national elites are referred to through the deployment of negative connotations and metaphors: "… undemocratic … facilitating Islam … as if they have capitulated" and: "The Netherlands is being given away by the elites" (Wilders, 2019).

To enhance his political narrative, Wilders draws particular attention to discourses revolving around freedom, liberty, democracy and sovereignty. These discourses are chosen to frame the nation-state as an entity fighting for the 'good' of the people. To maintain what nation-states have achieved (i.e. freedom, democracy, sovereignty), there is an urgent need to fight against the EU, since the EU is erasing the nation-state and facilitating mass immigration and the Islamic ideology of submission to Europe. The main cause is ascribed to EU's 'open migration policy', which keeps nation-states from controlling the borders of their own 'fortresses'. The nation-state is repeatedly being glorified as the protector of freedom, democracy and sovereignty, serving to underline that nation-states are everything the EU is not: "Our nations are shaped by their own history, culture, language and identity and therefore they are impossible to erase!" (Wilders, 2019). This demonstrates that the EU is nothing but an 'empty' entity forcing commands on people, whereas nation-states are strong and historically: "… based on a Jewish–Christian and humanistic civilisation" (Wilders, 2019). By applying a small degree of intertextuality through the involvement of essentialist distinctions, Wilders asserts that Europe is based on a particular humanistic civilisation that has brought about everything it is today and it cannot open its borders to a religion that is incompatible with this particular civilisation.

8.2.3. Exploring Facets of Euroscepticism

In the analysed texts, the way in which Euroscepticism can take on divergent shapes when pursuing different political aims becomes clear. In both instances, there is an attempt to reinforce the collective worth of 'us' by reacting against the 'other.' In the two texts, Euroscepticism either operates to promote the idea of a transformation into a European republic, or to imagine a return to the nation-state. Although both texts depict the EU as an elite

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34 Wilders asserts that 30% of Sweden and 20% of Germany and France will be Islamic by 2050.

construction overlooking people's needs and demands, Wilders' populist rhetoric attempts to frame Europe's nation-states as part of a superior civilisation, whereas Marsili and Guérot's vision attempts to encourage citizens to take part in a political transformation from below. While Wilders' deployment of essentialist boundaries attempts to maintain clear distinctions between 'us' and 'them' in terms of cultural heritage, languages, history and identity, Marsili and Guérot advocate for the implementation of a European law establishing an equal and coherent Europe. In short, Wilders' speech and Marsili and Guérot's political manifesto represent forms of Euroscepticism that, as Trenz and de Wilde (2009) point out, have news value (Trenz & de Wilde, 2009, pp. 14–16) by drawing attention to the uncertain future of Europe, providing the authors with an opportunity to imagine an alternative version of contemporary Europe.

9. The Narrative Analysis

9.1. The Political Struggle of the EU: Pro- and Anti-Narratives

In the first narrative, I focus on the community, WeMoveEU, and the movements, the European Movement and the Popular Movement against the EU. The reason for examining three very diverse entities in one narrative owes to the fact that they are part of an ongoing political struggle, attempting to frame and spread messages about the EU to achieve three divergent aims: greater EU cooperation in a binding community, Danish withdrawal from the EU, and a more fair, just and citizen-led EU.

WeMoveEU was launched in 2015 by a group comprising various European nationalities. They consider themselves to be pro-European despite the EU's apparent deficits. The community is a bottom-up initiative working against what they denote as a technocratic Europe.

The European Movement is a Danish pro-EU interest group trying to forge a positive narrative about why it is beneficial to be part of the EU. The movement believe in greater cooperation at the European level, and views the EU as a 'binding community' benefitting its citizens.

The Popular Movement against the EU is fighting for a Danish withdrawal from the European Union to establish a Nordic alliance; a hard Eurosceptic agenda.

In terms of how their narratives fused, one aspect was particularly present, namely that information and enlightenment are key to making people aware why the EU is either a benign or malign entity. Susanna from the Popular Movement against the EU and Christian from the European Movement are convinced that, as long as people are well-informed about what the EU does on the local, regional, national, European and global levels, they will stick to what the movements themselves subscribe to: a withdrawal from the EU or greater European

cooperation. The same kind of persuasive performativity was not to be found in David's statements. He was performing a soft and alternative-Eurosceptic narrative, the aim of which resides in transforming the EU into something more than just an economic community.

Another common observation highlighted by all three spokespersons was the way in which national politicians, after the coronavirus struck Europe, turned toward the nation-state and forgot about the EU. To Susanna, this clarified one crucial thing about belonging: "Where did we go first? We oriented ourselves toward our national communities, *the place where we belong when it is about such political issues*. Few people were waiting for Ursula von der Leyden" (Susanna, my emphasis).

David and Christian emphasised that if the EU does not come up with a reactive response to the corona crisis, it will pave the way for stronger nationalistic and populist tendencies.[35] The whole crisis discourse provides an opportunity for blaming the EU for everything that has gone wrong while paying tributes to how nations, successfully, have managed to cope with the pandemic, recalling Wilders' glorification of European nation-states. However, the existing crisis has also demonstrated what the EU and its member states are lacking:[36] "I have become disillusioned several times due to the EU's system's lack of solidarity", and when related to the refugee crisis: "I don't think we in the EU have been solidary when it comes to the handling of the migration crisis" (Susanna). "What we see is a lack of solidarity across the European Union's member states" (David).

During the interviews, it became apparent how each interviewee made use of the crisis-labelling to make their own viewpoints appear stronger. Christian yearned for national politicians to embrace European cooperation as the right tool to fight against a global pandemic, Susanna underlined how the EU once again had failed in managing a crisis, whereas David saw the crisis as a threat to the European project, necessitating the transformation that WeMoveEU is spearheading. There was, nonetheless, broad consensus about the uncertainty Europe is facing. David in particular expressed concerns about the aftermath of Brexit and the corona crisis (my emphasis):

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[35] Catherine Fieschi who has done research on populism puts great emphasis on how populist leaders will try to exploit people's despair after the emergence of the corona crisis. To her, it all boils down to: "… a test of progressive politics – a test of solidarity, but also a test of transparency" (Fieschi, 2020), meaning that governments must be transparent in terms of decision-making processes to gain trust and legitimacy from their citizens.
[36] The French economist Shahin Vallée states that the corona crisis has demonstrated Europe's fatal flaw: 'the lack of solidarity', leaving southern European countries in a state of despair (Vallée, 2020).

I do hope that both of these instances cause governments and political leaders in the EU to really *think about what Europe means, and what is the added value of what Europe is* … I hope there will be more cooperation and solidarity in Europe.

The interviews also revealed insights when touching upon what the EU stands for in relation to European history and identity. Unsurprisingly, as pro-Europeans, the European Movement and WeMoveEU believe that the establishment of the EU has prevented war and led to increased working, travelling and study opportunities. This is something that can easily be forgotten today, when particular media outlets and politicians frame the EU in a negative way to achieve news value or political votes.[37] To deconstruct negative narratives about the EU, Christian believes that (my emphasis):

The core task is to talk with local people,[38] so they can understand what it means for their everyday life. When debaters keep on mentioning that it is an elitist project … no one understands it, and neither do they identify themselves with such a project. *Identity is more about what the EU has done*.

Here, it becomes clear that the idea of a European identity, to Christian, relates to everything that the EU has made possible. However, he does not believe that there is and should be one overarching European identity but multiple European identities, which are, and can turn into, collective ones. Young people in Denmark are a good example:

They feel like they are Danes … but I also think that they feel like Europeans when they make use of the Erasmus program … or this new initiative with free interrail tickets. *These are some of the things which I think can create a European identity, a sense of community, love across borders* (Christian, my emphases).

Conversely, Susanna did not adhere to the idea of the EU as the safeguard of political stability. The long period of peace is attributable to trade among European countries. While trade is

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[37] In the book *European Identity – What the Media Say*, scholars examine how Europe and the EU are represented in the media of four European countries. The authors emphasise how news media inform and persuade citizens in their attachment to the EU (Bayley & Williams, 2012, p. 1).

[38] This contrasts with Capello and Perucca's paper on 'understanding citizens' perception of the EU'. They highlight that the way in which European policies are perceived by citizens depend on local conditions and citizens' awareness of what EU policies mean for their local surroundings (Capello & Perucca, 2017)

considered benign, it does not necessarily mean that Denmark needs to be a binding member. Susanne put great emphasis on how the EU is a constant hindrance for Denmark in terms of realising its full potential, for instance when it comes to implementing environmental laws: "Denmark has lost the chance to be a *pioneer-country* due to EU laws. We are not allowed to prohibit gas and diesel cars" (Susanna, my emphasis). In addition to that, she firmly believes that bottom-up change is impossible, leaving the EU with one opportunity: "I believe that the change should come from above, and I don't think it will happen in a sufficient manner. One of the core problems is that *they tried to build a democracy without a people*" (Susanna, my emphasis). Thus, the EU continues to be an elite construction, and there is no reason to erode this narrative: "We don't think that the EU's aims have been in prolongation of the people's aims and desires … some groups have clearly benefitted more than others" (Susanna). European identity is therefore not supposed to be thought of as being in relation to the EU. To Susanna, who has double citizenship, Danish and American, the EU line of demarcation has nothing to do with her sense of belonging. She conceives of herself as American, Danish, European and, even more importantly, a global citizen.

9.2. The Young and Enthusiastic Europeans – Benefitting from the EU

The second narrative deals with two students from Copenhagen Business School (CBS), Peter from Denmark and Matej from Slovakia, who are active members of the European Youth International movement. Combined, their narratives shed light on how the EU and Europe have come to play a central role in their identities.

  Once the interviews touched upon the idea behind the EU, Peter and Matej's narratives aligned to a large extent, despite some nuances. To Peter and Matej, the EU represents an optimistic project creating opportunities in terms of travelling, expanding one's social network and working. However, they both acknowledged that not everyone benefits from EU cooperation in the same way: "… my future depends on a positive EU cooperation. I understand that for a workman who is being underbid by a workman from an eastern European country, then, the EU cooperation is not beneficial. *There is definitely some ego in this*" (Peter, my emphasis). Matej also drew attention to this when comparing himself to other less privileged young people: "Maybe not everyone gets the same opportunity in their life, so I appreciate it a lot … I'm grateful that the EU has allowed me to go abroad and meet other people with other European nationalities." Moreover, the EU's ideals and values (e.g. democracy, freedom of speech, human rights) are something that Europeans should continue to disperse and promote to the rest of the world.

Peter's support for the European project is no coincidence. Since his youth, his father has always articulated positive stances on the EU: "… every time I have heard of the EU, it has been in relation to an optimistic project … I believe in cooperation instead of being the lonely wolf" (Peter). Matej has experienced such an optimistic project himself: "When I was at my high school in Slovakia, I was given the opportunity to attend four different Erasmus+ programs.[39] And each of them has been a good experience for me."

In contrast to these positive utterances, Peter exhibited some degree of self-reflexivity when explaining his personal relationship to the EU: "I have always been pro-EU, but, at the same time, it has always been clear that *the EU has been quite remote from me*. That *it is a bit opaque*" (Peter, my emphases). In attempting to explain this feeling of remoteness, Peter pointed out that it has something to do with Denmark's geographical positioning and way of embracing the EU. Matej was also less than enthusiastic when referring to how the EU functions politically: "I definitely think that *nothing is perfect, nor the EU*" (Matej, my emphasis). In this way, Peter and Matej not only frame the EU in a one-dimensional manner but incorporate some of the usual critical objections directed against the EU (e.g. that it is an elite construction, that it is too remote from people's everyday lives, that it does not provide equal opportunities). Giving their views on both the positive and negative effects of the EU makes them appear more deliberative.

As the interviews evolved, Peter and Matej expressed concerns for the future of Europe. The continuous rise of nationalistic and populist parties whose agendas rely on scepticism towards the EU makes it difficult to change the common perception of the EU and increase solidarity. Moreover, the corona and migration crises have clarified how the latitude of nation-states is too large when solving issues concerning all member states:

> I think that *the EU has not been allowed to do much*, when each of these crises came about. It has always been the nation-states controlling ... in order to tackle these global challenges, we need to have strong EU-institutions that can act swiftly (Matej, my emphases).

Peter is not only tired of national politicians' priorities but also yearns for a more salient EU in times of crisis: "I think it was frustrating that the EU did not announce anything public … it is sad that there has not been a common European effort against the corona" (Peter). To reinforce

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[39] The Erasmus+ program is an EU program supporting education, training, youth, and sport in Europe. Young students can thereby decide to go abroad several times during their educational career (What is Erasmus+?, n.d.)

this argument, he drew attention to recent events where Europeans have successfully acted together, leading to a stronger 'we' feeling:

> As we witness right now with Erdogan[40], who wants to send refugees to Europe … here, *it becomes an us–them feeling* ... I mean, *don't do it to us as Europeans*. I hope that it will unite us in Europe … it creates some sort of unitary feeling in Europe because *we have a common border* (Peter, my emphases).

Peter firmly believes that in the future, as new crises emerge, the 'us' feeling in Europe will strengthen. Europe will come to constitute a more closed entity towards the world. Although Peter acknowledged that this is to compromise with the European values he previously embraced, his conviction was founded in the idea that: "… as we are continuing to prosper economically in our part of the world, I think it will entail that we won't care much about other disasters, or economic issues in the world" (Peter).

While speculating on the future of Europe, Peter and Matej did not refrain from defining themselves as proud and enthusiastic Europeans. Matej considers himself to be European while acknowledging that he is from Slovakia. His personal experiences and educational achievements have meant that not only has he benefitted from European cooperation, but Europe, as a place, has come to constitute his strongest sense of belonging.

> I would consider myself as mostly European … when I was fourteen, I moved to Germany for one year. That's where I learned German … After that, I moved to Denmark. And at CBS, I got yet another opportunity to go abroad ... *I think this is the reason why I feel European. I have always been able to travel, work and study, wherever I wanted to* (Matej, my emphases).

When I asked him how his educational experiences have enriched his social network, and what he has in common with other Europeans, his answer was ambiguous. At first, he admitted that he could not see a clear pattern, besides the fact that they communicate in English. Thereafter, he turned toward the work of the EU again: "… without the EU, I would probably not have met all the people I know now" (Matej). This clarifies how his identity is mainly pronounced in

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[40] In the beginning of March, a new refugee crisis was said to emerge after the Turkish president, Erdogan, threatened to open the gates and send 3.6 million refugees into European territory – a consequence after political controversies with the European Union (Burdeau, 2020)

relation to what the EU has done, while being less pronounced in terms of social and cultural commonalities with other Europeans.

In contrast to Matej, Peter expressed multiple identities depending on the context in which he was speaking about himself. One such identity is his local identity, which he makes use of when being together with old friends, enabling him to perform his 'old role'. At university, travelling, or hosting events with the movement, his identity is connected to the European level. Here, he recognised that he relies on others and vice-versa, and this is what the European project is about. From having had social experiences in different parts of Europe to playing online computer games with players of different nationalities, Peter has taken part in networks that have enriched him: "You realise that some of the unspoken values are the same, and there are different ways of reaching a common frame of understanding" (Peter). To him, people are naturally searching for collective identities, to which his own tenet is to be as open as possible. His European identity is thereby related to the political dimension in terms of benefits and advantages, and socially from experiences in European countries, where he has met people with similar and different views to his own.

9.3. The Danish-German Border Region – A Unique Relationship

The Danish–German border narrative explores four individuals' experiences of living close to the border. Since all four individuals have a particular relationship to the border, their narratives are merged to illustrate how they construct their identities in relation to the other side of the border, and how, while representing different nationalities and generations, they conceive of the EU and European identity in similar but still distinct manners.

Herle and Luc are both seventeen years old and from Germany, enrolled at Tønder Gymnasium in Denmark. The reason they are enrolled in the educational system in Denmark is due to a conviction that the Danish educational system has advantages over its German counterpart: "… the Danish school system is much better" (Luc) and: "… my father thought that the English teaching was better in Denmark than in Germany" (Herle).

Luc and Herle's relationship to Denmark is characterised not only by speaking the language but also knowing about the Danish traditions and way of life, something the pair consider advantageous when comparing themselves to their German friends: "I am really happy to be bilingual. Especially because we are living in the border area, and I also have the opportunity to get Danish citizenship" (Herle). Having been raised between two cultures, one belonging to the domestic sphere in Germany, and the other to the societal and educational sphere in Denmark, Luc and Herle consider themselves to be mixed when reflecting upon their sense of

belonging: "When you are raised as part of the minority group, then *people do not feel either or*" (Herle, my emphasis). To Luc, the feeling was slightly different, as he also accentuated his German roots: "I would say that I am mostly German because my roots are German. But still, *I adhere to many Danish values* … behaviour and my network … I sympathise with many Danish things" (Luc, my emphasis).

Thus, they were highly aware of the uniqueness of being raised between two cultures, but also the fact that Denmark and Germany have managed to maintain close ties. This was also articulated as an outcome of European cooperation. Both believed that their upbringing had made it easier to understand why European cooperation is beneficial and how it enables one to create bonds with other Europeans:

> When you are raised with two cultures, then *you have a better understanding for the affinity that exists between countries*. We are able to work wherever we want to, we can travel freely, and I think that when you are raised with two cultures, then *you are more likely to have a better understanding of the EU and cooperation amongst countries* (Herle, my emphases).

Luc perceives the Western world and Europe as 'one big community': "I have always felt like belonging to one big community. And when it comes to Europe, *one big Europe with fluid borders*" (Luc, my emphasis).

In contrast with Luc and Herle, Claus and Jakob are two Danish men of middle age, living on the Danish side of the border. Living for more than forty years in the border area, they have experienced several transitions: from strict border control to open borders and the idea of a borderless Europe. To Claus, there is no difference between driving to a German or Danish village nearby: "We don't think about it ... It is a fluid border" (Claus) – indicating that to someone capable of speaking both German and Danish, the border has become more fluid and imperceptible. Consequently, when asked about what is so particular about the relationship between Germany and Denmark, neither hesitated to express its distinctiveness. In particular, Claus:

> … if you take Denmark and Germany, it is a unique relationship, which *everybody could learn much from* ... There are no border regions with as good relationships as the one we have between Denmark and Germany. *While other countries combat each other, we make use of each other in a good way* (Claus, my emphases).

Despite the framing of a unique and distinct relationship, the line of demarcation was more pronounced than Luc and Herle felt it to be: "I don't feel German, *but I have a good relationship to Germany … there is some sort of affinity with Germany*" (Jakob, my emphases). Claus also made it clear that he feels strongly connected to the local area, including Germany, while mentioning that European nationalities are very different in their cultural, social and political compositions, making it difficult for him to feel connected to southern and eastern Europeans. Instead, his connectedness to Germany stems from speaking the language, interacting with Germans in his daily life and by making use of opportunities on the other side of the border.

The unique relationship was present in all of the interviews, however, when referring to the refugee and corona crisis the interviews changed character. First, the corona crisis has made all four interviewees realise how much they make use of the border. This was naturally more pronounced in Luc and Herle's cases as their school lives ended abruptly. Jakob and Claus's responses, meanwhile, were articulated with annoyance, since the crisis constrained them in their pursuit of leisure activities: "We use it a lot, and that is also why it is quite frustrating for the time being" (Jakob). Second, while the corona crisis has brought about a yearning for the reopening of the borders, the implementation of the temporary border controls in 2015 has led to a persistent discussion in the area over the extent to which it has had an effect in terms of preventing illegal migrants from crossing the border.[41]

Herle clearly remembers when the border controls were implemented: "I was not that old … suddenly we had to remember our passports when we were going to the public swimming pool … It was really odd" (Herle). Luc, on the other hand, has noticed how the emergence of the refugee crisis has meant that people with certain characteristics are being checked more carefully: "… the border control got stricter … the police used to talk to the train conductors about which people were considered suspicious. And it has become much worse after the refugee crisis" (Luc). Herle has experienced similar situations on the train and pointed out that it has not increased one's awareness of differences between Danes and Germans but rather to people who look different, clarifying that she perceives it as a discriminatory way of treating people: "… they only check the ones who look different. The ones who have another skin colour. And, *I really don't get the point in doing it*" (Herle, my emphasis).

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[41] Carsten Yndigegn (2018) has done research on national identity in the border region and points out: "The Danish government's temporary suspension of the Schengen rules at the German-Danish border since the beginning of 2016 has animated certain political forces to push for border control to become permanent" (Yndigegn, 2018, p. 411)

Conversely, Claus is more than satisfied with the implementation of the border controls:

> … it is fine with the border controls *as long as I have my individual freedom to move freely around* … I am a supporter of closing the border, *so we could get the real border controls as we had it in previous times* … because I think that what we witness is that too many people who should not cross the border, actually are crossing it (Claus, my emphases).

Here, he makes it clear that the border controls are supposed to reinforce boundaries between those who are allowed to enter and those who are not, indicating how he perceives refugees and migrants as potential threats to his personal freedom. Put differently, boundaries between Germans and Danes are to be crossed because their cultures and people are similar, while the same cannot be said when it comes to migrants and refugees.

In opposition to Claus' straightforwardness, Jakob made use of some deliberations to explain why he thinks people like Claus have supported the implementation of the border controls: "I think that people thought it was the right solution. The majority votes for the Danish People's Party. The general opinion was that it was fine. I don't agree, *I think the problem is to be found somewhere else*" (Jakob, my emphasis). According to Jakob, the border controls have not had any significant effect but are part of symbolic politics. The political rhetoric works because the level of education is low and people live in traditional news and social media-driven echo chambers that reinforce the notion that everything that is foreign is considered a threat. In lieu of having border controls internally in Europe, Jakob believes the problem and therefore the border controls should be located elsewhere: "It doesn't make any sense to have this control … *we should rather have it at EU's external borders*" (Jakob, my emphasis). In the same vein, Jakob emphasised that European countries should be better at cooperating with one another and distributing refugees in a more equal manner. In this way, he drew on his posture as someone with a university degree in an area with generally low levels of education. This also came to be indicative of his own relationship to the EU and Europe when going beyond the local and national levels.

Speaking of the people living in his area, he said support for the EU is vague: "I think you would sense a general distancing to Europe in comparison with big cities. It is like in the rest of Europe, it is in the countryside and small villages that people have these opinions" and: "… we always hear about the bad stories … This is something people understand … It is the same with

populism … *it is easy to have a sceptical view towards the EU* " (Jakob, my emphasis). This is a worrying tendency, which, according to Jakob, suggests that people have forgotten the ideas underpinning the European project: peace, unity and prosperity. He fears what nationalistic and populist leaders are capable of doing: "For many years, the EU has been our security provider against wars and conflicts. If it disappears, it could easily get dangerous" (Jakob).

In Herle and Luc's case, although they did not mention populist and nationalistic tendencies, they believed that European countries should continue cooperating in times of crisis. Both mentioned that the first phase of the corona crisis had demonstrated a lack of solidarity amongst European countries. To Herle, the crisis has caused her to reimagine what border cooperation would look like without the EU: "… when it comes to the borders, it is really strange to see this sealing off in the streets … I started thinking this is perhaps what it would look like without the EU" (Herle).

9.4. Lampedusa – The Feeling of Abandonment

In the final narrative, I focus upon three Italians' life stories on the island of Lampedusa. I inquire into how they have experienced several pivotal moments with regard to influxes of migration through their different positions on the island – one working for the 'Mediterranean Hope' organisation, the others volunteering as local citizens for 'Forum Lampedusa Solidale'. In all three interviews, the interviewees emphasised how the lack of aid from the Italian state and the EU has led to a strong feeling of abandonment amidst a humanitarian crisis, causing great divisions among the local population. Therefore, although the island constitutes Europe's external border, Europe feels absent on Lampedusa except in the form of a remote idea. The feeling of abandonment has not only led to anti-state and anti-EU resentments but also an increasing awareness of us and them boundaries between locals and migrants. Anger and resentment among particular groups of locals have given rise to hatred towards the migrant, who has come to figure as the main culprit behind Lampedusa's present fate, scaring their livelihood, i.e. tourists, away. However, this account was in stark contrast to those of the interviewees with whom I spoke to. Contrary to the rising xenophobia, they were in possession of strong cosmopolitan visions and a critical distance towards the EU.

Rino is seventy-two years old, originally from Milan, and has been living on the island since his daughter married a Lampedusan twelve years ago. To him, it has been a big contrast to move from a large multi-ethnic city in the north of Italy to a small island closer to Africa than Europe. At the beginning of our conversation, he drew attention to some of the main tenets in his life, prioritising ethical dimensions: "I have always been following a saying that puts great emphasis

on treating others as you want to be treated yourself … My life has always included relationships with different people" (Rino).

Claudia is twenty-six and from the northern part of Italy. She has been living and working on Lampedusa for more than a year. She is the coordinator of Mediterranean Hope, which was born in 2014 after a disastrous shipwreck near the Lampedusan coast in 2013. Claudia's job varies from giving aid to disembarking migrants to staying in contact with the local population to maintain a good relationship. As she put it herself: "… we are the eyes and the ears, when it comes to migration" and: "… if you want to live on Lampedusa, you need to work with the community, and for the community".

Paola, who is in her mid-fifties, arrived on Lampedusa for the first time in 1990. In her early years, she worked as a freelance biologist collecting samples for universities in Europe, and now she works as a private teacher for students with learning disabilities.

Unsurprisingly, the major part of the interviews revolved around how migration has affected the island. To Rino and Paola, it was crucial to mention that Lampedusa has always been a transitory place for migrants. In the 1990s it was not unusual for Tunisians and Moroccans to arrive on the island before heading towards the mainland of Europe. At the time, it was not considered an issue for the local population given that the perception of Tunisians and Moroccans was different from how migrants are perceived today: "… in the '90s, the average person of the island would say, okay, some Tunisian guys arrived yesterday, let us bring them something to eat … It was like a person-to-person relationship. *They were seen as people looking for a better life*" (Paola, my emphasis). Because it only involved a small number of people, the locals did not perceive the influx as a threat because their everyday lives could continue as normal. But in 2008, when large numbers of people started arriving, Lampedusa went from a state of normality to one of despair and uncertainty. From 2008, the migrants disembarking on the island were from a larger variety of African and Middle Eastern countries.

In 2011, the first big shock occurred: "… there are 6,000 inhabitants on Lampedusa, but that winter, 5,000 migrants arrived on the island. There were also 3,000 policemen; can you imagine 6,000 islanders, 5,000 migrants and 3,000 policemen?" (Rino). To Paola, the shock could be compared with a land flooded by water. At first, people only notice that the water level is rising, until they realise that something is wrong. This sensation on Lampedusa was further enhanced by the feeling that neither the Italian authorities nor the European Union were providing sufficient help: "You start thinking, *why is it that Italy and Europe left us abandoned amid all this*? We are fewer people, but *why do our lives have less value*" (Paola, my emphases). However, as it was one of the first large disembarkations, the local population's natural reaction

was to render help: "… there was no difference between people of certain kinds of political and social views … In that moment, everybody was helping. I mean, even the ones that you never would expect to help" (Paola).

In the aftermath of the first big shock, daily disembarkations continued, making it difficult to digest everything that was happening: "… it was like post-traumatic stress-disorder ... You don't think about it, you don't talk about it, it is just there, and you know it" (Paola). Because there was a complete lack of help available to relocate groups of migrants to the mainland, they ended up being stuck on Lampedusa for weeks, leading to an unsettling feeling on the island. Later in 2011, as the situation continued escalating, local inhabitants started a riot, and a clash between a group of Tunisians and local Lampedusans took place. According to Paola, this has influenced further changes on the island: "It was like a fight between us and them. *It was the very first time that you could draw a clear line between us and them*" (Paola, my emphases). Not only did it cause loathing toward the migrants, it also started dividing the local population, as people such as Rino and Paola continued being hospitable: "… we were looked upon in a bad way by the rest of the people on Lampedusa" (Rino). Since 2011, Lampedusa has been a divided island[42] amongst groups representing different human and political beliefs; the main division regards migration and tourism (Franceschelli, 2019, pp. 8-9). In 2013, another shock occurred when a shipwreck caused 368 people to drown, just off the coast of Lampedusa. In that moment, people felt that it was considered a local issue, given that the national and European help being offered were so inadequate; the perception being that the further you are from the centre, i.e. Rome and Brussels, the less help will be provided. Although Paola emphasised how cruel and inhumane some of the locals' reactions had been, she is convinced that the reactions would have been similar in other parts of Europe:

> … if something like what is happening on this island would have happened somewhere else in Europe, people's reaction would have been the exact same … when you listen or read about it, it is one thing, but *when you are inside it*, it is completely different. *Your reactions are driven by your instincts* (Paola, my emphases).

Paola did not try to justify xenophobic actions – she explained that by living under such circumstances and by feeling neglected by the Italian state and the EU, people need to direct their anger towards someone: "When something is going wrong, you need to find the culprit …

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[42] Franceschelli deploys the term 'many islands in one island' to characterise the divisions on Lampedusa (Franceschelli, 2019).

the culprit is never the person with power, because it would be too difficult to beat him. *The culprit is the migrant*" (Paola, my emphases).

When living on a small island, you cannot run away from your opinions and beliefs, making the dividing lines amongst groups of people highly apparent. To Paola, this is a natural fact of life lived at the micro level, i.e. Lampedusa, reflecting the macro, i.e. Italy and Europe – xenophobic attitudes are omnipresent, the difference being that it is impossible to hide on Lampedusa, according to Paola.

The pressure from migration has meant that Lampedusa's reputation has changed from being a vacation paradise to a place permeated by migrants. This explains why categorisations such as 'the Gateway to Europe' are considered problematic. One of the consequences have been that tourists,[43] to a large extent, have abstained from choosing Lampedusa as their travel destination, putting families that rely on tourism into disadvantageous economic situations: "If I have a group of migrants who are dressed badly and smelling badly, it is a bad thing for tourism, and that's why people don't want them here" (Claudia). In contrast with Paola and Claudia, Rino was more straightforward in distinguishing between two kinds of people: "I saw good persons, hospitable persons … but in the middle of all those people, the majority was racist" (Rino). Instead of putting himself in the shoes of both the locals who feel threatened and the migrants, Rino focused upon the latter by drawing attention the migrants' conditions:

> ...They are fleeing from death, poverty, not having a future. … if they don't have anywhere to go, I will host them in my own home. It does not make me afraid. *It makes me feel more like a human being of this world* (my emphasis).

As the interviews proceeded, it became evident that the dividing lines on the island are closely related to identity questions, exemplified when Claudia explained how the local population perceives people such as Rino and Paola: "I have friends who have been living on the island for more than twenty years. *They are still seen as foreigners, because they were not born on Lampedusa*" (Claudia, my emphasis). This illustrates how Italy, as a country, is divided[44] when it comes to questions of identity, especially between the north and the south (Clò, 2006;

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[43] Since the 1980s Lampedusa has experienced a turnaround in terms of labour; from fishing to tourism. This has meant that there is increasing competition amongst the locals, which on the other hand has had consequences for the internal solidarity (Franceschelli, 2019, p. 3)

[44] Clò (2006) and Birindelli (2018) have delved into the Italian history of collective identity questions by going back to the Italian unification in 1859. The division concerns social, economic and cultural questions; often expressed through notions such as 'the affluent north' and 'the poor south'.

Birindelli, 2018). The most important identity on the island is the Lampedusan one, which is reinvented every time there is a crisis. Thus, the idea of an Italian or European identity is remote: "… imagine that a person on the island thinks about being Italian, and even this is difficult, then imagine how it is when they are thinking about Europe. I think it is close to nothing, zero" (Paola). The feeling of abandonment and lack of solidarity have distanced the population even more from Italy and Europe. This explains why a nationalistic party such as Lega has been able to exploit the anger and resentment: "*You don't feel any European spirit here*. Instead you see and hear Matteo Salvini from Lega … People here identify themselves with Salvini, who is very much against migration" (Rino, my emphasis).

Despite the fact that the culture is more European than African, and the unit of currency is Euros, the island does not feel like being part of Europe in any political or financial way. This becomes even more problematic when the only stable European presence is Frontex, the controversial coastguard agency. Rino, Paola and Claudia emphasised that this is a mere symbol of how the large buildings in Brussels and Strasbourg are falling apart, clarifying how European lives are considered more valuable than those of migrants and refugees: "… at a certain point, we need to ask, what does the European Union do to save the people who are in front of Europe's southern border. *Lampedusa is the border of Europe*" (Rino, my emphasis). Rino also revealed that he used to be part of a political party promoting the idea of a united Europe, something he considers utopian today when every single European country is promoting nation-first politics, leaving Italian, Maltese and Greek migration hotspots in a state of helplessness.

As such, it became apparent that all three interviewees were in possession of sceptical views towards the EU while adhering to a strong form of cosmopolitanism. This is illustrated by some of Paola's last statements: "… a young guy who is sixteen years old, uneducated and from Mali, in my opinion, he has the same rights as a well-educated doctor from anywhere else in the world. *A human being's value is always the same*" (Paola, my emphasis). Moreover, although the three interviewees were more inclined to talk on behalf of the population in terms of identity-related questions, they did not disguise their difficulty in feeling European, as they have experienced what it means to be overlooked and neglected by a political entity that ought to take care not only of European centres but all parts of Europe.

9.5. Summary

In the presented interviews, I have demonstrated how the interviewees, in different ways, position themselves in relation to different levels: the local, national, European, and global. In some instances, the European level was more pronounced, however, the local level was

generally more prevailing. In addition, much suggests that the closer people are to the centre, i.e. Brussels and large cities in Europe, the more they are inclined to involve Europe in their narratives (Eder, 2009, p. 439). Conversely, the further from the centre and the more overlooked people feel they are, the more Europe seems irrelevant, as on Lampedusa, where Europe remains a remote idea. I have also elucidated what role the interviewees impute to EU (e.g. a security provider, an enabling force, elite-construction, a super-state neglecting vulnerable border zones). These ascriptions illustrate the tensions occurring amongst the different levels.

10. Discussion

10.1. Europe at a Crossroads – A Snapshot of European Realities

In this study, I have elucidated when and how multiple identities surface in social actors' narratives. I have done so to explore notions of collective identities within Europe and to identify whether and how the EU and Europe evoke a sense of belonging according to various social actors. Overall, it is difficult to highlight one overarching collective European identity amongst the narratives in this study. Instead, an abundance of ideas and viewpoints emerged when the interviewees spoke about themselves in relation to Europe and the EU. However, when it comes to social bonds across Europe, no coherent and meaningful organisation of social relations surfaced. Nonetheless, when contrasted with Meinhof, Armbruster and Rollo's study *Everyday Narratives in European Border Communities* (2003), which found that Europe and the EU did not enter the narratives of people living in border regions, the interviewees in this study made use of Europe and the EU in their narratives to represent themselves depending on the context and purpose. European identity can thus be seen as an undercurrent of local and national identities – it becomes 'handy' in certain contexts but absent in others. Social agents can make use of the European identity to represent themselves, suggesting that European and national identities predominantly are compatible and thereby not antagonistic. Additionally, depending on one's communicative resources, one can select certain macro-discourses that resonate with one's worldview, which in turn serves to enhance one's performativity and thus makes one appear more reflexive and deliberate when representing oneself.

The corona crisis not only has compelled the interviewees to re-evaluate how their everyday lives have changed from before to now, it also appears to have evoked a feeling of togetherness, as most of the interviewees' narratives fused by demanding more European cooperation and solidarity. This corresponds with a survey of 10,000 people conducted at the end of April by Datapraxis and Yougov (Butler, 2020). In this survey, most respondents claimed that the

pandemic has demonstrated the need for the EU to act more cohesively. More interestingly, the scholars conducting the survey identified that the main reason is that Europe is no longer only a project motivated by ideas and values, but a community that must take back control over its future (Ibid.). The results of the survey, in conjunction with the narratives in this study, suggest that the corona crisis may potentially create new pathways that will turn Europeans into more than the mere sum of people governed by European bureaucracies (Eder, 2014, p. 219). A closer look at the narratives in this study reveals that the younger generation, represented by Herle, Luc, Matej and Peter, appear to involve Europe and the EU more in their narratives. However, this involvement arises mostly in terms of benefitting from European cooperation and rarely entails social relations across European borders. Despite the positive framing, some underlying anxieties also existed. For instance, concerns about how European leaders will deliver solutions to some of the most urgent issues facing the younger generations (e.g. the climate crisis, and social and economic equality) to keep alive the idea of European togetherness. The older generations (especially Christian and Jakob) put much emphasis on how the EU has brought peace, unity and prosperity. Conversely, Susanna perceived the European project as an elite construction and claimed that there should not be any linkage between the political project of Europe and a European identity. To Claus, people living within European nations possess too many differences, making it easier to remain in the local container where everything is already known. On Lampedusa, the lack of aid and solidarity have affected Rino, Paola and Claudia to such an extent that, although they are well aware of what the European project wants to represent, they cannot support a project that keeps them in a dire position. This circumstance makes it difficult for them to feel European in any way.

Examining macro-discourses on Europeanisation illustrates that Europe and the EU, discursively, are framed in divergent ways. This often manifests as a reflection of social actors' political aims or desires for gaining influence over Europe's actions and further evolution as a political entity. In the analysed discourses, the recurring crisis labelling functions as a way of expressing the uncertain future Europe is facing while also presenting opportunities that foster novel playgrounds for alternative imaginaries; a return to the nation-container, a more united Europe or a transformation of the current political system.

When contrasted with the social agents' narratives, we have observed how they combine memorial elements from the past, present and future together with cultural, political and social aspects. Discursive elements overlap in the narratives: The most frequent one is the common recognition that Europe is in the midst of a crisis. Here, we have explored that crises can be perceived and lived through in different ways, depending on which part of Europe social agents

reside in. We can hereby state that the experience of a crisis compels people to make sense of the situation they are facing. In experiencing the corona crisis, Herle, Luc, Claus and Jakob have realised how much they use the other side of the border (e.g. school, shopping and leisure time activities). They imagined what life would be like without the freedom to cross the border. However, the permanent humanitarian crisis on Lampedusa can by no means be compared with the crisis in the Danish–German borderland. This factor underscores the importance of one's localisation and exposedness to crises, which also determine people's latitude for selecting and forging identities – and that one's identity is often connected to personal interests (e.g. freedom to move, study, work and travel in Europe).

In general terms, the recurring element of crisis, in both the narratives and discourses, operates, in Eder's terms, as: " … a mechanism that puts the meaning of boundaries on the table" (Eder, 2014, p. 226). That is, it foregrounds the question of who belongs to whom and who can cross the social and symbolic boundaries that separate people. One striking feature here is the adherence to the strong version of cosmopolitanism – embracing migrants and refugees as humans in need of help – while the weak form distinguishes between who is allowed to set foot on European soil and who is not. The antipode to cosmopolitanism is the nationalistic agenda, embodied by Wilders, who portrays the European civilisation as in danger of being overtaken by Islamisation. When contemplating the refugee crisis, we can deduce that social relations have changed as a result. The refugee crisis has also meant a transformation of boundaries from being abstract to concrete. On Lampedusa, local inhabitants are strongly divided on how to accommodate migrants and refugees. The same is reflected in the Danish–German border region, where some groups support strict border controls, while others oppose them. Regarding differences amongst identities, identities appear to go hand in hand with various forms of solidarity. The interdependency between the two comes to the surface in different contexts, most conspicuously when social actors voice opinions on how to resolve local, national and European crises. Interestingly, the findings in this study correspond to some of the findings in the novel study *European Solidarity in Times of a Crisis – Insights from a Thirteen-Country Survey* (2020). The scholars use four kinds of solidarity when examining the extent to which European citizens express solidarity regarding different topics. The most conspicuous one with regard to this study is 'refugee solidarity', defined as: "… citizens' willingness to grant asylum status to refugees entering the European Union (external solidarity) and to share the burden by allocating them among the member states (internal solidarity)" (Gerhards et al., 2020, p. 3). In this study, most interviewees expressed views similar to this

definition, which also, surprisingly, is one of the main results in the study conducted on solidarity in Europe in times of a crisis.

These findings lead to the following key question: What makes people act upon Europe and not solely purport to represent solidary views? Here, it is essential to mention the persistent discussion on whether there is a European civil society capable of influencing the political agenda of the EU (Georgakakis, 2015 p. 229). Following Eder, civil society is a site where people construct a social bond which demands solidarity from all to realise the common good (Eder, 2009, pp. 24-26. Thus, it not only needs to be imagined, but must also be performed and staged to activate common European citizens in their struggle for a more united and equal Europe. However, this is often said to be lacking at the European level, leading to the term 'a weak civil society' (Ibid., p. 24; Eriksen, 2005, p. 348). Therefore, Europe's future seems reliant on the extent to which civil society organisations and actors are capable of influencing the political agenda and thus mitigating the perception of the EU as being nothing but an elitist project (Johansson & Kalm, 2015, p. 2) – but instead a political project spearheading the green transition, taking care of all its geographical corners, and providing security, solidarity and unity, just as it was recently framed by the most prominent European politicians (e.g. Charles Michel and Ursula von der Leyden) after the economic recovery package was negotiated a settlement in July 2020 (*BBC*, 2020).

10.2. *Limitations, Weaknesses and Further Research*

In terms of the limitations and weaknesses of this study, several points need attention. Firstly, the unfolding narratives in this thesis represent only snapshots of European realities. In fact, my own analytical account is itself a narrative construct that has attempted to delve into European citizens' life-worlds. If I had conducted interviews in other parts of Europe, the outcomes would undoubtedly have been different. Thus, the results are not generalisable but can inform and inspire future sociological research on European identity. Areas of study can range from border regions to larger cities within Europe.

Secondly, my selection of cosmopolitanism and Euroscepticism can be questioned. Many ideologies compete within the discursive field of Europeanisation, and a potential objection could be the lack of focus on other salient ideologies such as populism or nationalism.

Thirdly, in terms of methodology, the corona crisis compelled me to conduct Skype and telephone interviews. The interviewees could therefore use the situation to represent themselves differently than if it had been a face-to-face conversation. On the other hand, it could also be seen as an advantage since they could express explicit views without noticing my reactions.

Additionally, the cancellation of the field trips meant that I only had limited access to social actors. In the case of Lampedusa, I only had the chance to interview people doing voluntary work. They mainly represented cosmopolitan views. This situation meant that I did not have the chance to talk to other groups on the island, but only heard about them through Paola's, Rino's and Claudia's narratives. The same criticism is applicable to the selection of interviewees in the Danish-German border regions; here, it was only Claus, who possessed nationalistic opinions. Of course, the decision not to adopt quantitative methods also demands attention: If I had made use of data from Eurobarometer and the European social survey, I would have been in a position to generalise more regarding the findings and achieve greater breadth within the thesis.

A great part of the theoretical inspiration was derived from Klaus Eder, who has devoted much of his scholarly work to the idea of a collective European identity. As his main proposal on the need to study narrative networks was considered, I now add my proposal for further research.

Firstly, this thesis has demonstrated how a European identity becomes 'handy' in certain contexts and absent in others. This 'function' could be further researched in terms of examining whether there are other types of identities that fulfil the same function (i.e. being referred to when doing so suits the context). Moreover, the difference between 'a distant European identity' and the more 'close-to-home identities' is also a topic that further research could consider (e.g. when they collide or contradict each other in times of crisis, and how this outcome in turn is related to various forms of solidarity).

Secondly, in terms of European identity, there is still a need to identify sites and stories of narrative networks to explore the extent to which citizens from different parts of Europe are in possession of a collective European identity. Additionally, what these multiple identities could reveal in terms of solidarity across borders and the legitimacy and trust of the European political project; members of transnational movements could be an interesting subject.

Thirdly, as boundaries and borders continue to evolve with both the persistent influxes of migration and ongoing discussions on acceding new countries as European member states (e.g. Turkey, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia), there is a strong incentive for conducting research on how European territorial borders, as well as social and symbolic boundaries, are evolving and will evolve in Europe.

11. Conclusion

I have now delved into the European social world, where social agents engage in making sense of living in Europe. In the dissected narratives and discourses, ideas and arguments for and

against Europe circulate, clarifying how the EU and Europe are entities without a *finalité* but part of ongoing conflicts, rendered visible through the tensions that occur at different levels.

Based on the preceding sections, I now concisely answer the research questions one by one:

1. The pro-European community and movements conceive of Europe and the EU as two interchangeable entities. The political project is considered the central element for the construction of a European identity; what Europe has done. On the other hand, the Popular Movement against the EU conceives of the EU as a disloyal elitist project taking away nation states' possibilities for being pioneering countries; a European identity has nothing to do with the political project. The movements' and community's narratives reflect European citizens' narratives in the sense that the EU can be seen as an enabling force, as a peaceful project or – when being sceptical, as in the case of the Popular Movement against the EU and on Lampedusa – as an elitist project that treats equally neither European citizens nor refugees and migrants fleeing war and despotism.

2. Multiple identities surface in different contexts. In this study, the unfolding identities often moved from the local and national levels before reaching the European and global levels. One's multiple identities can vary in terms of combinations and thus allow individuals to represent themselves differently under various circumstances. Depending on the level being addressed (e.g. local, national, European or global), social agents incorporate different elements (e.g. views, hopes, interests, experiences, history, politics, norms and values) to make their identities appear stronger and more coherent.

3. The narratives have disclosed that there is not one overarching collective European identity. Instead, social agents make use of different European attributes to talk about themselves in relation to a European identity; the narratives have exhibited multiple forms of European identities, which can exist alongside each other. Overall, discourses and narratives interact when it comes to what Europe and the EU represent and, even more so in this thesis, Europe's uncertain future. In terms of resonance, social agents appear to be able to pick out discursive elements that resonate with their own worldviews. This enables them to enhance their perception of the EU as being a political entity that works to improve Europeans' lives, an entity described with a high degree of ambivalence, or as an elitist project which ought to be dissolved to relinquish control back to the nation-state.

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Appendix

Appendix A – Interview Guides

Lampedusa:

Innanzitutto, vorrei ringraziarvi/ti/la per darmi questa possibilità. Prima di cominciare, vorrei soltanto raccontare un po' di me. Sono Emil, e NON sono un giornalista! Sono invece un sociologo danese di Copenaghen. Nel mio passato ho studiato sociologia a Napoli e Trento, a volte mi sento più italiano che danese, ed allora ho deciso di andare a Lampedusa per capire la storia dei lampedusani. Adesso sto studiando in Svezia dove sto facendo la mia tesi sull'identità Europea. Il mio punto di partenza è Lampedusa perché vorrei capire come la situazione a Lampedusa è sviluppata da quel momento in cui è cominciata la crisi dell'immigrazione.

First of all, I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity. Before we start, I would like to tell a bit about myself. I am Emil, and I am not a journalist, instead I'm Danish and from Copenhagen. In my past, I have studied sociology in Naples and in Trento – sometimes I even feel more Italian than Danish, and this is one of my reasons for coming here to understand the stories of the Lampedusans. Right now, I am studying in Sweden where I am doing my thesis on European identity. My point of departure is Lampedusa, because I would like to understand how the situation on Lampedusa has evolved since the moment in which the migration crisis started.

1. Quindi, la mia prima domanda riguarda la vostra/tua/sua storia qui a Lampedusa? Quante generazioni della vostra/tua/sua famiglia hanno abitato a Lampedusa prima della vostra/tua/sua? E che cosa significa Lampedusa per te/voi/lei?

Thus, my first question revolves around your story here on Lampedusa? How many generations of your family have lived here before yours? What does Lampedusa mean to you?

2. Quale lavoro fa/fai qui a Lampedusa? E che cosa ha significato la crisi dell'immigrazione per la tua vita ed il tuo lavoro?

Which kind of work do you do on Lampedusa? And what has the migration crisis meant for your personal life and work-wise?

3. Come era a Lampedusa prima la crisi di migrazione? Quale tipo di gente veniva a Lampedusa e per quale scopo? Quali sono le storie dei Lampedusani?

How was Lampedusa before the migration crisis? Which kind of people came to Lampedusa? And for what purpose? What are the stories of the Lampedusans?

4. In altri termini, come posso spiegare ad una danese cosa vuol dire 'essere Lampedusano/a' – e nello specifico, possiamo considerare Lampedusa come parte di Europa/Italia, o piuttosto come qualcosa indipendente dall'Europa e dall'Italia?

In other words, how should I explain what being Lamepdusan means to a Dane – and in this case, can we then characterize Lampedusa as part of Europe/Italy, or something independent from Europe and Italy?

5. Secondo te/lei/voi, a Lampedusa la maggior parte si sente Europei oppure no? Puoi/può spigarmi perché? Quali sono i motivi secondo lei/te/voi? E in aggiunta, come definisci/definisce Europa? Come qualcosa che riguarda geografia, politica, gente o qualcos'altro?

According to you, does the majority of Lampedusans feel European or not? Can you explain me why? What are the motives according to you?

6. Ho letto che la maggior parte dei Lampedusani sono / sono stati pescatori, ed il mare significa tanto per voi. Come si percepisce il mare a Lampedusa (i bambini/adulti/anziani)? Che valore ha il mare per voi? Chiedo solo questo perché mi ricordo quando ho letto il libro di Pietro Bartolo (Lacrime di sale). Lui descrive il mare come tutto per i lampedusani, che c'è un certo profumo di sale nell'aria a Lampedusa

I have read that the majority of Lampedusans have been/and are fishermen, and the ocean means a lot to you, right? What value does it have for you? I ask because I remember when I read Pietro Bartolo's book. He describes the ocean as everything for you, that there is a certain scent of salt in the air on Lampedusa.

7. Puoi/può spiegarmi come i lampedusani concepiscono la posizione geografica di Lampedusa?
   Nel senso che siete più vicino all'Africa che all'Europa, nonostante siate parte di Europa ed
   Italia?

Can you explain me how the Lampedusans understand/define the localization of Lampedusa? You are closer to Africa than Europe, nonetheless you are part of Europe and Italy?

8. In aggiunta all'ultima domanda, quando i lampedusani si parlano, voi dite che siete parte di
   Italia, Europa o qualcos'altro?

In extension of the last question, when the Lampedusans speak to each other, do you say you are part of Italy, Europe or something else?

9. In tempi recenti che cosa è cambiato rispetto alla vostra percezione della posizione geografica
   Lampedusa? Ormai, siete più consapevoli dei confini tra L'Europa ed Africa? E se si, cosa
   significano i confini a Lampedusa per voi? Non solo rispetto ai migranti, ma anche la gente che viene dalla Sicilia ed altre parte di Europa?

In recent times, what has changed regarding your perception of Lampedusa's localization? Are you more conscious of the borders between Europe and Africa now? And if yes, what do the borders on Lampedusa mean to you? Non only in terms of the migrants, but also the people who come here from Sicily or other parts of Europe?

10. Come pensate che i confini siano cambiati rispetto a prima? Siete più consapevoli dei confine di Lampedusa e dell'Europa dopo che è emersa la crisi dei migranti? Qui mi riferisco anche alla espressione: "Lampedusa, l'entrata di Europa, il punto più sud di Europa, il sacro continente etc."

How do you sense the borders now in comparison to previously? Are you more aware of the borders on Lampedusa and Europe after the crisis has emerged? Here I also refer to the expression: Lampedusa, the gateway to Europe, the most southern part of Europe, the sacred continent etc.

11. In che modo hanno i media influenzato la vostra percezione sulla crisi? Nel senso che, avete

ricevuto tantissimi giornalisti che hanno dovuto coprire la situazione – e nel documentario di Luca Vullo (Cca' semu), i lampedusani sottolineano come il lavoro dei giornalisti non sveli tutto ciò che c'è da sapere su Lampedusa - quindi cosa vi è oltre?

In what way has the attention of the media influenced your view of the crisis? In the sense that you have received a lot of journalists who have had to cover the situation – and in Luca Vullo's documentary, the Lampedusans highlight that the focus of the journalists do not disclose everything that Lampedusa represents.

12. Un'altra domanda tratta lo sviluppo del turismo a Lampedusa. Può/puoi spiegarmi che cosa il turismo significava per l'isola prima che la crisi cominciasse, e la differenza tra adesso e prima? E magari anche un po' di dettagli sui turisti del passato a Lampedusa? Da dove veniva la maggior parte dei turisti? Europa del nord oppure paesi del sud di Europa?

Another question is about the development of Tourism on Lampedusa. Can you explain me what tourism meant for the island before the crisis started, and the difference from now and before? And maybe also a bit about the clientele that normally arrived on Lampedusa for holiday? From where did the majority come from? Europe of north or countries from the southern part of Europe?

13. In aggiunta, lei/tu pensa/pensi che il turismo abbia creato/crei un legame più forte tra i Lampedusani e altri Italiani/Europei? Nel senso, la solidarietà cresce quando diverse persone di diversi luoghi d'Europa interagiscono?

In extension, do you think that tourism has created/creates a stronger tie between the Lampedusans and other Italians/Europeans? In the sense that the solidarity grows when different persons from different places in Europe interact?

14. Adesso, quanto vicini si considerano i Lampedusani all'Italia ed all'Europa? Nel senso che Lampedusa è un territorio isolato, però fate ancora parte dell'Europa e dell'italia? Pensi/pensa/pensate che abbiate ricevuto abbastanza focus e aiuto per risolvere la situazione? Qui, mi riferisco anche alla distribuzione dei migranti in Europa, dove La Danimarca per esempio ha preso molti meno migranti rispetto all'Italia?

Right now, how connected are the Lampedusans to Italy and Europe? In the sense that Lampedusa
is an isolated island, but you are still part of Europe and Italy? Do you think that you have received enough focus and help in order to solve the situation? Here, I refer also to the distribution of migrants in Europe, where Denmark for instance has taken very few in comparison to Italy?

15. Come spieghi/a/ate la polarizzazione a livello politico? Quando avete votato per le elezioni Europee nel 2019, la metà di voi ha votato per la lega mentre il resto per Pietro Bartolo che rappresenta umanismo ed un miglior tipo di accoglienza per i migranti. Secondo me, potrebbe essere una espressione di molte cose, ma soprattutto può riflettere la questione migranti. Puoi/può spiegarmi che cosa chiedono i Lampedusani? Non solo dal governo Italiano, ma anche L'unione Europea? Che cosa dovrebbe fare il resto d'Europa?

I cannot avoid asking how you sense the division among the local population on Lampedusa? When you voted for the European election in 2019, half voted for Lega and the other part for Pietro Bartolo who represents humanism and another kind of hospitality for the migrants. I think that it could be an expression of many things, but especially the migration question. Can you

explain me what the Lampedusans demand? Not only from the Italian government, but also the European Union? What should the rest of Europe do?

16. In aggiunta, che cosa vuol dire quando alcuni dei Lampedusani dicono che i migranti portano malattie? È perché pensano che ci siano certe differenze umane tra i cittadini Italiani/Lampedusani ed i migranti? Su cosa si basano queste differenze? Secondo te/lei, possiamo dire che ci sono vere differenze? O solo differenze false che vengono espresse/esagerate nei media?

In extension, what does it mean when some of the Lampedusans say that the migrants bring diseases? Is it because they that there are certain human differences between the Italians/Lampedusans and the migrants? What do they base these differences on? According to you, can we say that the differences are real? Or only false differences that are expressed/exaggerated in the media?

17. Vorrei anche chiederti/le una domanda sull'identità Lampedusana. Lei/tu potrebbe/potresti descrivere l'identità Lampedusana? Quali sono gli aspetti più importanti? Ci sono aspetti comuni tra l'identità Lampedusana ed Italiana? O parliamo di due diverse cose?

I would also like to ask you a question on the Lampedusan identity. Could you characterize the Lampedusan identity? What are the most important aspects? Are there common aspects between the Lampedusan and Italian identity? Or are we talking about two different things?

18. Potresti/potrebbe anche spiegarmi come vedete L'Europa in generale? Non solo l'unione Europea, però anche la gente Europea? Avete contatti con tedeschi, svedesi, danesi, che ne so, che fanno parte della sua/tua/vostra rete sociale? Oggi siamo tutti collegati su Facebook, Instagram twitter, e magari questo ha anche cambiato qualcosa per voi rispetto a come vedete gli altri Europei?

Can you also explain me how you see Europe in general? Not only the European union, but also the
European people? Do you have any German, Swedish, Danish, what do I know, contacts with whom you are connected? Today we are all connected on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter. And maybe it has changed something for how you see other Europeans?

19. Per concludere, vorrei anche parlare un po' del futuro Lampedusano. In altre parole, che cosa si augurano i Lampedusani per il loro futuro? E quali aspetti sono i più importanti per creare più solidarietà tra voi ed il resto di Italia ed Europa? Puoi/può spiegarmi se qualcosa è cambiato nel modo in cui i Lampedusani si confrontano con il mondo circostante? Magari avete imparato qualcosa dalla crisi di migrazione quando parlate sul vostro rapporto con l'Italia e l'Europa?

Finally, I would like to talk a bit about the Lampedusan future. In other words, what do the Lampedusans want for your future? What aspects are the most important for creating more solidarity between you and the rest of Italy and Europe? Can you explain me if something has changed regarding the way in which the Lampedusans confront the surrounding world? Maybe you have learned something from the migration crisis when you talk about your relationship with Italy and Europe?

20. Alla fine, possiamo dire che I lampedusani rappresentano il punto più a sud in Europa, e che siete orgogliosi di essere Lampedusani, Italiani, Europei? O vorresti/vorrebbe cambiare qualcosa su questa definizione?

Lastly, can we say that the Lampedusans represent the most southern part in Europe, and that you are proud of being Lampedusans, Italians, Europeans? Or would you like to change something regarding this definition?

WeMoveEU:
1. Can you shortly explain how WeMoveEU came to surface? Especially in regard to the motives that were behind the establishment of the movement? Was there anything in particular that you wanted to change when you thought of not only the EU as a political institution, but also Europe in general?

2. On your page, you mention economic and social justice, as well as environmental sustainability and citizen-led democracy - why are these the core objects of your movement and what is your role, as a movement, to change the current way of how the EU functions?

3. When you think of Europe, what do you then think of? I know that it is a broad question, but perhaps your experiences as a movement have brought you closer to an idea. Both in terms of how Europeans in general think of Europe and how it relates to your work. Is it based on history, culture, economics or social life? Are there particular dimensions which unite Europeans according to your experiences?

4. How do you conceive of the whole Brexit aftermath and the unfolding of the corona-crisis in a European perspective? What does it tell about the current state of EU and Europe? Do you think it can be a potential stepping stone for a brighter European cooperation in the future, or is it just another sign of concern when thinking about how populists and nationalists will be able to refer to Brexit in a forward looking perspective?

5. Regarding your activities, can you try to explain me about what you do, how are your activities organized? Which groups do mostly participate in terms of age, gender, nationality, educational background? And, what is the most common explanation for them wanting to join your movement?

6. Can you explain me how your online activities and campaigns work, and perhaps also which kind of narrative you want to address to Europeans? Also, what are the main differences between your online activities and grounded activities - do you experience more support for your activities online or in real life?

7. In my thesis I focus upon the existence of a collective European identity, where I ascribe much value to social relations amongst Europeans. When I read about your movement, it appears that there are good reasons to believe that European citizens are capable of uniting in order to struggle against unjust political, economic and social conditions? Does it make any resonance to you? And, do you think there is such thing as a European identity, or is it just an academic construction?

8. Yet, there are still many skeptical views on the EU, and many who still see the nation-state as the ultimate savior. How do you consider the future of the European Union? Where are the main difficulties residing? And what can Europeans and the European civil society do in order to forge an even stronger movement that goes beyond national borders? Or perhaps, there are already strong indications of that through your work?

9. Finally, if you in the current moment were to write a short-story to future European generations, what would you then emphasise as being the greatest achievements of the EU and the greatest forward-looking obstacles?

European Youth Movement in Copenhagen:
1. Can you briefly tell a bit about yourself. Your age, what you do in life, nationality and educational background?

2. Why did you decide to join the community? Was there anything particular about it that resonated with your own views on the EU?

3. Can you tell me a bit about your activities as an organisation/movement? What you do, and which kind of messages you want to send to the Europeans, and in particular the Danes?

4. Also, who are the members of the organisation/movement? I read on Facebook that the majority is from Copenhagen Business School. Do you think this is because the students there are more in favour of the EU and European cooperation in comparison to other places?

5. When you think of Europe, what do you then think of? It is a broad question, but perhaps your experiences as a European citizen has brought you closer to an idea. Is it related to European history, culture, free movement, social life across borders, or something else?

6. In extension of the last question, can you tell a bit about what being European means to you, and how it relates to your local and national identity? Do you think that your experiences and viewpoints are common among other members of the organisation, and how do you think your European feeling is different from other more sceptical Europeans?

7. Do you have a lot of friends with other European nationalities? And if yes, is there anything in particular you have in common (travelling, studying, work, interests etc.)?

8. When it comes to the EU as a political institution, how do you then think it functions, and what do you think should be changed to improve European citizens' perception of it?

9. With the current corona-situation, and also the migration and climate-crisis, do you then think EU has acted sufficiently in order to demonstrate why the political project is needed, or could it be done in a different way? And perhaps, how do you see the future of Europe, also after Brexit?

10. Finally, from your experiences as a European citizen joining the European Youth Movement, do you think it is possible to create a uniting European narrative to create more solidarity among European countries, and perhaps also more trust to the EU as a political institution?

Popular Movement against the EU:

1. Ift. din egen baggrund, så jeg kunne læse mig til, at du er vokset op i San Fransisco, men har derefter læst statskundskab på KU – bare lige for at sætte det ind i en passende ramme, kan du så fortælle lidt om din baggrund, og måske også, hvornår din skepsis til det Europæiske projekt begyndte at røre på sig, og hvorfor?

2. Til at starte med så kunne jeg godt tænke mig at høre lidt om, hvordan I gerne vil karakteriseres? Er i et parti, en politisk bevægelse eller noget helt andet? Og hvad gjorde, at du selv meldte dig ind i folkebevægelsen mod EU?

3. Hvem er medlemmer af Folkebevægelsen mod EU? Er der en primær gruppe, der tilslutter sig bevægelsen/partiet?

4. Når det kommer til de aktiviteter I laver, kan du så fortælle mig lidt om, hvad I laver, og hvad for nogle budskaber det er I forsøger at sende til danskerne? Og har I en generel opfattelse af, at hvis danskerne bliver mere oplyste om EU, så vil de også blive mere skeptisk/positivt anlagte?

5. Kan du give en kort beskrivelse af, hvori de største problematikker ved EU er at finde? Og måske også, hvad det er som der i dine øjne er gået galt siden etableringen af det politiske projekt? (nævn evt. historien om freds og økonomi projektet, til i dag, hvor det er blevet et meget mere politiske orienteret projekt, som de også selv nævner på deres hjemmeside!)

6. Hvad tror du, at EU-valget i 2019 var et udtryk for, når det kommer til danskernes syn på EU, og måske også tilslutningen til Folkebevægelsen? Hvad kan forklare, at I ikke fik flere stemmer? Og i en Europæisk kontekst, hvordan kan det så være, tror du, at nogle lande er mere positive stemte overfor projektet end andre?

7. Hvor ser du EU's største udfordringer ift. Den nuværende Corona-krise, men også migrations- og klima-krisen? Har EU allerede vist sig ude af stand til at løse, hvad der på tydeligste vis fremstår som globale politiske problemer?

8. Hvordan kan disse problemer ellers løses ifølge jer? Er det op til hver enkelt nationalstat, eller foretrækker i små alliancer, såsom det Nordiske Fælleskab, som I selv foreslår? Jeg kan se, at I referer til Norge som et skole eksempel på jeres hjemmeside. Men jeg tænker bare, at ift. Globalt ansvar, har vi så ikke allerede set, at Danmark ikke kan finde ud af at være foregangsland, når det kommer til at modtage flygtninge og migranter (udrejsecentrene er mangelfulde og ikke acceptable) og senest med klimalovgivningen, hvor Dan Jørgensen ikke vil lytte til Klimarådets anbefalinger (jeg tør ikke engang nævne Fogh og Løkke regeringen, hvad angår udnyttelse af det globale syd, som I selv peger på)?

9. Så hvem skal vise verden den rigtige vej, hvad angår løsninger til de ovennævnte problemstillinger? Er det ikke netop Europas rolle, fordi hverken Danmark eller et Nordisk samarbejde vil have den samme magt som EU har ift. Andre stormagter?

10. I forlængelse af det andet, hvad skal vi gøre med de nationalistiske og populistiske bevæger, der hersker i Europa uden et fælles samarbejde, der kan modstå og forandre

den udvikling som lige nu er i gang (dermed ikke sagt, at EU er lykkedes med det, men hvad er alternativet)?

11. Og hvordan kan man sikre, at et Nordisk fællesskab ikke vil ende up i et lignende elitært politisk projekt som det EU I peger på har fejlet? Og hvad endnu vigtigere er, hvad er forskellen på internationalt samarbejde, som I fremhæver, og EU samarbejde?

12. I siger i en video på Facebook, at I forestiller jer, at et Nordisk fællesskab ville have en aftale med EU. Vil det så sige, at I ikke går ind for en fuldkommen opløsning af EU, men blot Danmarks udmeldelse? Og er der måske ikke også noget tvetydigt i det, hvad angår ansvar og solidaritet i en global verdensorden?

13. I forhold til de andre Euroskeptiske partier som I samarbejder med I Europa, hvordan skal man så forstå jeres samarbejde? Er det noget, der udelukkende bygger på at få EU til at gå til grunde, eller bygger det også på en solidaritets-følelse ift. Det Europa I ønsker skal udvikle sig? Altså at alliancen bygger på en eller anden fælles form for Europæisk identiet, der bare ikke er i forlængelse af EU? Jeg tænker i særdeleshed på, hvor indbyrdes forbundet vi er med hinanden, når det kommer til rejsemål, kultur, og vores fortidige historie i Europa? Er det noget, der ifølge jer gør udover det Europæisk politiske projekt?

14. Kunne alternativet til de alternative forslag I selv opstiller, ikke være flere transnationale fællesskaber, der netop lykkedes med at præge EU i en anden retning, hvor lokale og nationale problemer synliggøres på et EU plan, således, at folk får en anden opfattelse af EU som ikke-værende et elitært politisk-projekt? Jeg mener idéen om en Europæisk civil sfære, der kan ændre på EU's politiske agenda?

15. Udover dette, kan man så godt føle sig Europæisk uden at støtte op om EU hos Folkebevægelsen mod EU? Og, på det lidt mere personlige plan, hvad føler du dig så selv rent identitetsmæssigt? Identificerer du dig med det nationale, det europæiske, måske endda det globale niveau – og hvorfor?

16. Hvad skulle der til for at I kunne støtte op om et fælles Europa? Og hvordan skal man forstå de unge/midaldrende/ældre, der føler sig både danske, men også Europæiske – er der noget problem i et sådant udsagn, og hvad tænker du, at det er et udtryk for?

17. Ift. Corona-krisen og Brexit, synes I så, at der er en generel mangel på solidaritet iblandt medlemsstaterne, og hvordan tror I det ville være anderledes uden det eksisterende EU? Tror du, at sociale relationer på tværs af Europæiske landegrænser ville kunne skabe solidaritet uden et fælles politisk-projekt? Hvad synes du, at corona-krisen har vist jer som parti/bevægelsen, når det kommer til EU's fremtid, og måske også jeres forhåbninger om Danmarks fremtid uden et medlemskab til EU?

Interviewees living near the German/Danish border:
1. Til at starte med kunne jeg godt tænke mig at høre lidt indtil din baggrund, hvor du er vokset op, dit arbejde, hvor du bor henne nu og ikke mindst fritidsinteresser?

2. Hvis vi bevæger os lidt mere over i den geografiske retninger, og dermed sagt Tønders og Krusås placering ift. Tyskland og grænsen – hvordan er det så at bo i det område, og

kan du prøve at fortælle lidt om, hvor meget du selv kører over grænsen og i hvilken anledning det oftest sker?

3. Er der mange i din omgangskreds, der jævnligt kører over grænsen til Tyskland pga. forskellige slags ærinder? Og har det været noget man tog for givet, efter at grænserne inden for Europa blev åbnet op?

4. Hvis vi så bevæger os over i nyere tid. Kan du så prøve at beskrive, hvordan det var da den midlertidige grænsekontrol blev indført? Hvad var din egen reaktion da den kom? Og hvordan var den generelle reaktion i dit lokal-område?

5. Ift. Baggrunden for implementeringen af grænsekontrollen. Tænkte du så, at det var et fornuftigt tiltag, eller noget man kunne have løst på en anderledes måde?

6. I forhold til løsningen af migrationskrisen, tænker/tænkte du så, at det er et Europæisk anliggende, eller noget Danmark må løse på egen hånd? Tror du på, at de Europæiske lande kan løse konflikten sammen, eller er det en umulig opgave?

7. Ift. I dag, er der så en grund til bekymring, når det kommer til, hvem der krydser grænsen, eller det ifølge dig, noget der er blevet kørt op fra politisk side og i medierne? Jeg spørger, fordi, at en tredjedel af danskerne at beholde den nuværende grænsekontrol, såfremt den gør en konkret forskel, samtidigt med, at størstedelen stadig støtter idéen om fri bevægelighed i Europa.

8. Jeg tænker her særligt også på, hvordan du tror det også har påvirket de Danskere, der oftest kører over grænsen til Tyskland, og omvendt, Tyskerne der kører til Danmark for at handle eller besøge venner? At det måske gjorde en mere opmærksom på forskellen mellem Danskere og Tyskere, eller om det ikke påvirkede én på den måde?

9. Har man vænnet sig til at grænsekontrollen er der nu, eller er det stadig noget man tænker på, når man kører over grænsen? Og her tænker jeg også på om man tænker på, hvorfor den er der, eller om det element er gledet ud, fordi man har vænnet sig til det?

10. Hvad tænker du ellers om at bo så tæt på Tyskland? Er det noget, der gør at man har nemmere ved at knytte bånd til Tyskere, og måske også andre Europæere generelt? Her tænker jeg også på, hvis du har børn eller familie, der selv har krydset grænsen meget og måske selv snakker tysk?

11. Når det kommer til dit eget sociale netværk, har du så nogle bekendte og venner, der enten er bosat i Tyskland, eller er Tyskere? Og, hvordan synes du generelt set, at forskellene mellem danskere og tyskere kommer til udtryk, hvis der altså er nogle?

12. Ift. Dig egen opfattelse af din identitet? Tænker/føler du så, at den primært er forbundet til det lokale samfundsliv du er en del af, det nationale ift. At være dansker, eller det Europæiske? Altså, at Danmark er en del af en fælles Europæisk Union, hvor vi samarbejder med andre lande, og størstedelen af vores lovgivning kommer fra EU love?

13. I forbindelse med det sidste spørgsmål, hvordan tænker du så, at folk i Tønder/Kruså og omegn generelt set identificerer sig med Europa og Tyskland? Er det noget folk er positivt stemte overfor, eller er man mere kritisk anlagt?

14. Når nu vi er i en corona-krise, og vi som Danskere er en del af EU, tænker du så, at det er vigtigt, at vi løser krisen i fællesskab, eller bør vi, som vi har gjort i Danmark, løse krisen nationalt, før vi kan hjælpe andre lande i Europa?

15. I forlængelse af det foregående spørgsmål, så kunne jeg godt tænke mig at spørge dig om, hvorvidt du tænker der er brug for et mere solidarisk og samarbejdende Europa, ikke bare under corona-krisen, men også fremover med klima-krisen og internationale politiske kriser – og kan du også prøve at forklare, hvad der ligger til grund for dine synspunkter?

16. Til sidst kunne jeg godt tænke mig at høre, hvordan du tror fremtiden kommer til at være ift. Grænsekontrollen? Er det noget du tror kommer til at ophøre indenfor nærmeste fremtid, eller tænker du, at den kommer til at fortsætte med at være der? Hvis ja til det sidstnævnte, tænker du så, at det vil forstærke de lokales bevidsthed om forskellen på Danskerne, tyskerne og Europæerne generelt, eller er det noget som måske allerede finder sted?

Appendix B – All Codes and Excerpts from Coding-transcripts

Us-them boundaries — 1
Uncertainty — 1
Threats — 1
The World– Cosmopolitan... — 1
The people — 1
Temporal aspects — 1
Solidarity — 1
Social relations — 1
Skepticism — 1
Reflexivity — 1
Proposal — 1
Politics — 1
Personal Interests — 1
Personal Identity — 1
Personal experiences — 1
Personal background — 1
Performativity — 1
Participants — 1
Origins and Aims — 1
Opportunism — 1
Norms and values — 1
Normative expressions — 1
National Identity — 1
Nation-state — 1
Multiple Identities — 1

Local Identity — 1
Identity — 1
History — 1
Future of Europe and EU — 1
Future aspirations — 1
Explicit positioning — 1
European Identity — 1
Europe — 1
Eurocentrism — 1
EU — 1
Definition — 1
Crisis — 1
Civil society — 1
Boundaries — 1
Borders — 1
Activities — 1
Achievements — 1

WeMoveEU (David)

D: Yes, absolutely. I don't really think I can answer this question. I think it would be more appropriate to ask some of the people in our community. What they think, specifically, on this issue. When we get to the end, let us talk about that a little bit. Maybe we can get in some of the people from our community to answer these questions (14.55).

D: Okay moving on to question four. How do you see the European situation after the Brexit and the whole corona-crisis. Well, again, and this is perhaps more my personal opinion. I think we see a common threat from the Brexit and the unfolding of the corona-crisis. What we see is a lack of solidarity across the European Union between member-states. And I think this is one of the things that has upheld the European Union since World War II and the development of the European communities. Those formal, legal, substantive and significant expressions and demonstrations of solidarity. And I think that in these two instances that is definitely something which is lacking. We know that the council decided something last night with regard to a package as a response to the corona-crisis. I haven't read what is going on, but I know up until that point, at least when they agreed upon something, there was a real demonstration of a lack of solidarity between member-states. And I do hope that both of these instances cause governments and political leaders in the EU to really think about what Europe means, and what is the added value of what Europe is. What is the unique selling point for it if we are talking about it in a business sense. And I hope that there will be more cooperation and solidarity in Europe in the future. But who really knows. Yes, I think it is potentially something that could spearhead greater cooperation, or something that could give fuel to the fire of extremists, populists and nationalists. I don't really know which one, but time will tell (16.46)

E: It's interesting. For me, being a Dane. Right now our prime-minster is forming a social-democratic government. And last night after the meeting, she was saying that each national-state has to cope with the debt-crisis themselves. And of course, we need to show solidarity, but we cannot distribute the debt equally. To me, this is perhaps another sign of lacking solidarity when it comes to solidarity and responsibility in Europe (17.30)

CODE STRIPES

Coding Density
Explicit positioning
Future of Europe and the EU
Threats
Future aspirations

D: Regarding our activities and what we do. Which groups do mostly participate in terms of age, gender and profession. So, with regard to the first part, I am going to send you our new strategy which will answer the question in a lot of detail. And the second part, which groups do participate mostly. In terms of age, I can tell you that the majority of our list is definitely older, about the age of 55. Gender, I think we are pretty well split. And nationality, it tends to be the nationality of the languages we communicate in. The six ones that I said earlier. And I think that we actually started working in Portuguese too. In terms of educational background, I don't really know. What is the most common explanation for why they join. Again, I don't really know, but we could definitely ask them (18.38).

D: Question six. Can you explain about your online activities and grounded campaigns. How they work and which kind of narrative you want to address to Europeans. I think for the first part of the question, the strategy will answer that. And for the second part, it is really broad, because our narrative is changing all the time depending on which campaign we are running. But I think you can find more about this in our strategy. We work for inclusion, anti-racism, democracy. We are against the neoliberal economic EU project. With regard to differences between our online activities and grounded ones. To be honest, we don't do many on the ground. We have done a few. We did a paper signature collection, and that was very successful. We had hundreds of thousands signatures. But generally, we don't do many on the ground and we are very focused on our online. But it is something we would like to change in the future. And I think there is a bit of lack in our strategy as well (20.38)

E: Okay, that makes sense (20.42)

D: Question seven. I think again, I don't really have an answer, and I am not comfortable about answering. So if that is okay, let us move on to number eight (21.05)

D: I think that this question relates to what I've said earlier on. But generally, I think that something which is really important for the future of Europe relates to political and economic aspects. I think that there is a very strong view that the EU is just a neoliberal economic construction that absorbs business and sort of the system of capitalism. So we suggest that the European Union will only have a real and true future if it involves more than just being an economic community. But actually being a real entity that works on a political level to answer the important problems that face Europeans today, caused by these neoliberal system of economics, caused by the capitalistic systems, caused by racism, patriarchy etc. So that I think is going to be the most important thing for the European Union in the future. (23.00)

E: And the last question is also related to how the upcoming generations are going to perceive EU and also act upon Europe in terms of the forward-looking prospects. Things such as the environmental crisis and so on (23.33)

D: Yes, in terms of what the EU has achieved, I think there have been some great achievements, I don't know about the greatest one. But there have been a bunch that the EU has done in terms of protecting citizens and opportunities. And also protecting them from exploitation by business and the capitalistic system. But I also think that the EU participates in a lot of these systems as well with regard to asylum-seekers, just generally participating in that neoliberal structure. I'm not really sure about the greatest achievements. But when it comes to obstacles, I am concerned about whether the European Union provides answers for the biggest problems of our times that are caused by capitalism, our neoliberal system, patriarchy, climate change and so on. These are the greatest forward looking obstacles. And the question is how is Europe going to approach the climate-crisis, the corona-crisis. How does Europe provide answers to European citizens that do want to see Europe working for them. Not only on an economic level, but on a political level as well. Those are what I think are the greatest obstacles (24.45)

E: Okay, great (25.00)

The European Movement (Christian)

C: That's fine with me. I will try not to make too many dependent clauses. I have transcribed a lot myself, so I know how it will benefit you in the transcription process. Let us start. (05.10)

E: Do you want me to pose the questions in a chronological order, or what do you prefer? (05.30)

C: Yes, do that. That's fine (05.40)

E: Okay. So the first question is about what the European Movement stands for, and also how it is expressed through the activities that you do for the Danish people? I've seen on your webpage that you encourage common Danish people to discuss the EU around the dinner table (06.30)

C: Of course, it is crucial to create an awareness of oneself, when you are an interest group. The European Movement is a pro-European interest group. That means we try to create a positive narrative about why it is beneficial to have pro-European cooperation. We are often accused of being enthusiastic Europeans, or starry-eyed. And in fact, so we are. We can easily take this label on us. That is the first thing, which means that the overall framework says that we are EU positive, we need more of it, and we need to engage in a binding European community. But we also have a belief saying that knowledge about the European project, most frequently also reflects the opinions you have about the European project. And this is also why we do a lot of enlightenment work in the European Movement. As you mentioned yourself, a lot of debates, teaching activities, and all these things which you normally associate with an educational association. I think that's it (08.50)
E: Okay, I also read an article by you on Altinget.dk from 2017, where your argument is that enlightenment and information are making the Danes more positive oriented towards the EU? (09.30)

E: I've been there myself. To try to have an experience on my own. And yes, they told me that they offer presentations to high-school classes and so on. I remember myself in high-school. I didn't know how the EU functioned, how the decision-making-processes come about and so on. So of course, it is a positive thing in itself (15.30)

C: Definitely. Now, in the question it says how our work corresponds with the EU. And I think that I answer that question by explaining the example as I did before. We have also had a lot of focus on the Eastern enlargement. And yes, of course you can say that it is an elite-project, but think about how many people in Eastern Europe who have been lifted out of poverty, they have a much better life, because they have become part of the EU. Try to keep focus on some of these things, I don't think that there is any elitist about this, it is rather solidary-politics (16.10).

E: And yet, I also think about the rise of populism and nationalism in some of these countries. Think only about Hungary and Poland. I also think about how to handle this from a EU perspective (16.30)

C: Yes, I agree. But this is a result of how national-leaders throughout Europe always have been blaming the EU for everything that is considered bad, while taking the honor of everything that is good. Then it is easy to employ these nationalistic tendencies. They become sort of a natural evolvement, when you have a system that functions in that way (17.00)

E: And now to a sociological question. Your chairperson, Stine Bosse, always talks about a binding community. What does it mean to you? Is it that we are standing together as we are supposed to do now? Or in relation to the relationship between the nation-state and the EU? But most importantly, how you understand a community when you emphasize it as something particularly important (17.20)

C: Do we talk about it in relation to the corona-crisis, or in general? (17.38)

E: First of all in general terms, but of course also in regard to the corona-crisis. I saw one article on your web-page this morning emphasizing how the hell the Danish government decided to send useless equipment to Italy (18.00)

C: Yes, definitely. There are many aspects in this case. First, in regard to the corona-crisis, it exhibits the legal challenges there are for a political construction such as the EU. Because, for the health-system, the EU has only a supportive role, meaning that the EU cannot make laws and intervene in the member-states' health-systems. Already there, you have a difficult set-up if you are going to solve a crisis. There have been implemented a lot of logistical tasks on a EU-level, transport of different things, protective gear, lots of things. But, I think the Commission, when they stepped forward, they said it right in terms of what a community should be. Big on big things, and small on small things. I think we agree on this. Again, we have our defense reserve discussion, but also the climate part for instance, and the migration crisis as well. Some of the crises which the nation-states cannot solve on their own. This is where we mean that the EU should apply their main resources. In these instances, you need to commit yourself to some things in the work, but we should avoid detailed regulations when dealing with crises. It can quickly create EU-loathing, once you start engaging in too many things, which in fact are irrelevant (19.40)

E: When it comes to the migration-crisis, the corona-crisis and so on, the south has been severely exposed because of its geographical positioning, and also economically here under the corona-crisis. Do you think there has been a lack of solidarity in these cases on a European level? (20.00).

C: Yes, very much. Both with regard to the corona-crisis and the migration-crisis, there has been a lack of solidarity amongst the member-states. But there is still a difference here. For the migration-crisis, you actually have the competences to do a difference than when it comes to the health-system and the corona-crisis. There has definitely been a lack of solidarity when it comes to the help provided to the Southern-European countries, undoubtedly (20.50)
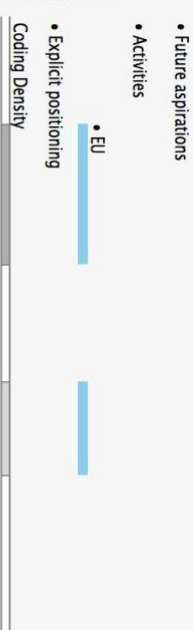
C: I am going to say no to whether there is a collective European identity. But I am going to say yes to the idea of multiple identities when it comes to Europe. Some of them can also be collective. But it is not only one. Think about young Danes. They feel like they are Danes and they are enjoying life. But I also think that they feel like Europeans when they make use of the Erasmus program, or the Commission's proposal, or this new initiative with free interrail tickets. These are some of the things which I think can create a European identity, a sense of community, love across borders. Where you experience that we are not only a country, but we are a European continent. That is perhaps a suggestion. I also think that elderly people have a post-war identity. That Europe stood together. I think that there are several identities. The whole peace-project is what European identity is to the elderly generations (40.00)

E: Have we forgotten this today? (40.15)

C: Definitely, no one says that a war cannot break out again. The borders are closing down and the nationalistic leaders flourishing. It is becoming more infected and dangerous (40.20).

E: Great, thank you very much!

Popular Movement against the EU (Susanna)

causes. Democracy, environment and solidarity. We believe that the EU is undemocratic. Members of the parliament, the ones who are elected by the people cannot introduce bills. It is only the commission. So, they don't listen to the people but the lobbyists in Brussels. And this reflects very much the bills that are being introduced. In regard to the environment, we believe that the EU has been on the wrong side. Partly because Denmark has lost the chance to be a pioneer-country due to EU laws. We are not allowed to prohibit gas and diesel cars, although the majority in the Danish parliament desires it. The reason why is because it contradicts the European common market. Internationally, we have also been constrained. Denmark's foreign policy cannot contradict EU's. Some time ago, the Nordic countries proposed what came to be the Basel convention, which has to with chemical waste. In that case, we were being told to pull back our bill, because it was not EU's official opinion. Norway went further, and it got accepted internationally. And that's the reason why there is less poisoning nowadays. We are being constrained in many ways. In terms of solidarity, we believe that the model of Danish society is under treat with social dumping. And internationally speaking, when we talk about solidarity, it is only in regard to the EU member-countries. The EU has built trade-walls meaning that it is very difficult for other countries to increase their level of prosperity (17.00)

E: Okay, this was a very comprehensive explanation. One could say that this EU-project is too much of an elite-construction, which you try to run counter by emphasizing how local and national interests are being overlooked, and the nation-state loses some of its sovereignty. And the EU is not managing it very well (17.30)

S: Yes, you could put it like that. Some local and national interests are being trumped by the EU. The same accounts for national things, I mean, when things are concentrated only on the EU level. It is not that we are against European cooperation. In many areas, it makes sense. But EU has a lot of power in areas, where it doesn't make sense at all (17.55)

E: It is quite interesting what you are saying in terms of how the situation is now with the corona-crisis. We have realized, now when it is time to harvest strawberries and vegetables, that we rely on labour-force from other countries. Now when they aren't here, we ask ourselves, who should then do this labour. However, I would like to ask you a question about the Euro-skeptical parties you mentioned before. The parties you cooperate with. Is it something that consists of more than just a skepticism towards the EU? Perhaps, there is some sort of solidary feeling, or something else? That you can identify yourselves with one another (37.15)

S: It is mostly about resistance toward the EU. You need to remember, we are not a political party in the same way as the Social Democrats. We are a movement against the EU. Therefore, we cooperate with other movements, who are against the EU like us. Our solidary work with other countries is more about cooperation with different NGOs. For instance, we have had a close cooperation with Global Action. Before, their name was African Contact. The question about the West of Sahara. And this is because, we feel that we, as privileged Danes, have a responsibility. We feel a responsibility, and therefore we try to create an awareness focusing on people who do not have the same opportunities as we have. It is not about a certain European feeling. We cooperate with European movements and parties, mainly because they deal with the EU as we do (39.00)

E: But when you talk to your Greek colleagues, don't you think that you are capable of putting yourself in their situation? Perhaps you have the same taste for music, books, food etc. (39.20)

S: Yes, to a large extent. And even more when I speak to my Norwegian colleagues. We have similar cultures, and similar languages. It is difficult to say whether our connection is stronger to the ones who already are part of the EU, than the ones who are not. Personally, I feel as American as Danish. So, if I speak to an American politician, then there is also some cooperation going on. We have sympathy and empathy with our collaborators in the world. But I cannot answer whether we have a particular European feeling (40.30)

European International Youth (Matej and Peter)

Matej

E: And what about yourself, what does being European mean to you? And how does it relate to your national and local identity? (15.15)

M: I consider myself mostly European. Maybe there is a little Slovak in me, sometimes. And of course, I am a Slovak. But, I would consider myself as mostly European because when I was fourteen, I moved to Germany for one year. That's where I learned German. Then I moved back to Slovakia. After I finished my high school education, I moved to Denmark. And at CBS, I got yet another opportunity to go abroad, and I went to Germany again for one semester. And, of course, I have worked in three different European countries. I think this is the reason why I feel European. I have always been able to travel, work and study, wherever I wanted to (16.40)

E: Okay, when you think about some of your friends in Slovakia and other parts in Europe, do you then consider yourself a rare case? Or is it a common thing? Something which a lot of young Europeans feel nowadays? (17.00)

M: Maybe it is a rare case with me. But, I think it depends. When I was at my high-school in Slovakia, I was being given the opportunity to attend four different Erasmus+ programs. Each of these lasted two weeks. And each of them has been a good experience for me. Maybe not everyone gets the same opportunity in their life, so I appreciate it a lot. It is hard to say whether people in my country feel the same way as I do (18.15)

E: Can you explain me what happened after your first experience in Germany, when you were fourteen? Something that changed? Maybe you realized that you could go abroad? (18.50)

M: The fact that I learned German provided me with several opportunities in my home country, because this kind of education is appreciated. English, of course, is a language that everyone speaks, but it doesn't really give you any advantage. But, if you speak other languages, German for instance, which is one of the biggest in Europe, then you benefit from this. Not just in Slovakia, but everywhere in Europe (19.20)

M: That's a good question. I really don't know how to answer this. I have a lot of really good friends across Europe. But, I can't really see a clear pattern when it comes to why we are friends. Or, what we have in common. We all speak English together. I guess it is the work of the EU. I mean, that we got to meet each other. Maybe that's what I would say. I'm grateful that the EU has allowed me to go abroad and meet other people with other European-nationalities (24.25)

E: So, in general, from what you are saying, once you become aware of the network you take part in, then the prejudices you might have before regarding nationalities, they are actually disappearing? (24.40)

M: Yes, definitely. I would say that without the EU, I would probably not have met all the people I know now (25.50)

E: Okay, and what about the current corona-situation, and also the migration and climate-crisis, do you think the EU has acted sufficiently to demonstrate why the political project is needed, or could it be done differently? And how do you see the future of the EU? (26.00)

M: When it comes to the big crises that Europe has been facing for ten years now. I mean, the financial crisis, the migration crisis, and right now the corona-crisis. I think that the EU has not been allowed to do much, when each of these crises came about. It has always been the nation-states controlling. They have controlled crisis-situations. And this confirms that in order to tackle these global challenges, we need to have strong EU-institutions that can act swiftly. And, also in a strong manner. That will also mean that none of the member-states are left on their own. A Europe with a firm structure, so that we are able to face new crises when they arrive (27.50)

E: Do you think there has been a lack of solidarity? I mean, there must also be placed some sort of responsibility on the shoulders of our national leaders? (28.00)

Peter

P: Yes, it is a shame. But, I have to recognize that it is not everyone who sees it the same way as I do. It has to be a gradual change. An enhanced us-them feeling will perhaps occur again in twenty years when new crises will emerge. However, as we are continuing to prosper economically in our part of the world, I think it will entail that we won't care much about other disasters, or economic issues in the world (28.00)

E: From what you are saying, can we then say that as we are going through more crises in Europe, we are going to look more inwardly towards Europe? So, now we are perhaps looking inwardly towards the nation state, but in the future, it will be Europe? (28.10)

P: Yes, I think so. It won't happen from one day to another. As we witness right now with Erdogan, who wants to send refugees to Europe. Open the border and then send the refugees to Europe. I think that during the last half year, we have thought that he shouldn't do that. And here, it becomes an us-them feeling again. I mean, don't do it to us as Europeans. I hope that this is something that will unite us in Europe, and making us cooperate more. I think it will benefit us. I mean, from what I know about sociology and economics, then, if you have a greater feeling of affinity to a society, then you will also increase the cooperation. I think there will be some sort of spillover effect (29.20)

E: On a more personal level, can you try to tell me about your own relationship to Europe? And how it corresponds to your local identity, you spoke about your friends and football, and also about what being Danish means to you (29.40)

P: I would say that, while most people from Vallensbæk are pro-EU, although not in a loud way as I am. For me, there has always been an interest in relation to things that I have investigated, which normally were seen in close relation to the local level. I mean, from what I have realized during my investigations. And, from what I have seen and heard during lessons and lectures, I think it has been quite clear that there are advantages in being part of the EU. And, this is something which I want to be part of. And now, I feel like having a societal-responsibility, when it comes to telling the person next to me be about the EU (31.10)

P: In regard to whether the EU has done enough, I would say no, they have not acted sufficiently. I think the EU does a lot of great things, but the way in which they show it, is less good. In Denmark we have had long discussions over whether we should be part of the EU. And, the EU-question is a recurring topic for discussion in Denmark. To me, this demonstrates that the EU is not good enough, when it comes to demonstrating what they are good at. I would say, in other countries, when I have been driving across France and Italy, for instance. In these countries, it is not unusual to encounter EU-flags outside people's doors. There is another culture in it, it seems to me that they are more integrated, although still very critical. But here, we also need to remember that they have been members for a long time. I also think it is because they are closer to the centre, and they have more seats in the parliament. One clear problem with the EU is that it is too remote to people. Especially, for countries far from the centre as in the case of Denmark. Also in eastern Europe. I think that there are more than 2000 km from the capitals in eastern Europe to Brussels. So, it can easily become very remote (48.15)

E: So, what should the EU do to be more salient? (48.20)

P: One good example would be to produce TV-programs across European countries. There was one, I think it was one and a half year ago, where nine European countries cooperated. One thing is that the program was bad, however, I think the EU should have a free TV-channel for everyone. It should not be propaganda, and here, I am very aware of the subtle distinction. It should be a comprehensive TV-channel in different languages. It could be in English, French, German, and so on. But, preferably in English, so that we have something that could bind us together. A common way of communicating. It should not be EU propaganda, but programs produced across European countries, where EU countries cooperate. And, it should be about the EU, primarily. It can also be the EU and something else (50.00)

Danish-German border region (Herle, Luc, Claus, Jakob)

Herle

experience it, where I am part of a Danish high-school, Tønder Gymnasium. Many Danes cannot understand this mixture, they don't understand why we also feel attached to Denmark. They wonder why we decided to enroll in a Danish high-school. Many questions arise when you initiate your first period as a student. Why have the parents decided to send their children to Danish high schools? And so on, and I also understand it, but to me, I am definitely mixed. And I would also like to, if I stay in this area, that my children will get to know both cultures (22.40)

E: Okay, that is a very interesting answer. If we go one step further. How do you then feel, I mean you were raised with different cultures and things were more fluid, but what do you think of when it comes to Europe and being European? Do you think it is easier to feel European in relation to how you were raised? (23.00)

H: Yes, definitely. When you are raised with two cultures, then you have a better understanding for the affinity that exists between countries. To me, it is crucial that the borders are open, which is part of the EU cooperation. We are able to work wherever we want to, we can travel freely, and I think that when you are raised with two cultures, then you are more likely to have a better understanding of the EU, and cooperation amongst countries. Because you are raised with two countries, and cooperation as well (23.50)

E: Okay, and this is a general feeling amongst the ones who were raised like you? (24.00)

H: Yes, I also know many Germans who have a good understanding of it. But, I can imagine that when you look at a big group, then people who are raised with two cultures are more likely to possess a better understanding of it (24.20)

E: What do you think about people generally in Tønder and Kruså, I mean the elderly and also middle aged people, are they often in favour of the border-control, or how do you experience it? Do you think they have a good relationship to not only Denmark and Germany, but also Europe? (25.10)

Luc:

E: I would like to ask you one question about the border. Do you think the salience of border-checking has any effect on the Danish and German relationship? (24.10)

L: It depends on from which angle you see it. For instance, my father who is not having as close a relationship to Denmark as I, he is experiencing it in a different way. When Denmark closed the borders, but the German borders remained open, there were still many Danes crossing the border to buy different products. To me, it was all right, but to people who do not have a close relationship to Denmark, but are using the border, it was experienced in a negative way. Objectively, I think you experience it in a negative way, because you do not feel welcome when it happens (25.10)

E: When it comes to your own identity, can you try to explain me a bit about it, although it is difficult? (25.30)

L: I would say that in general, I don't care much about where I am from and so on. I am a fan of globalization and a big global society. Having said that, I would say that I am mostly German, because my roots are German. But still, I adhere to many Danish values. Not citizenship, but behavior, and my network. I sympathize with many Danish things. The associational life is something which I really identify myself with. But generally, I would probably say eighty percent German and twenty percent Danish (26.20)

E: Okay, it is probably also a tricky question. But I am also interested in hearing about what you think your childhood has meant for you. I mean, two different cultures and languages. Do you think it is easier to feel connected, with your background, to the European and global level? (26.50)

L: Yes, very much. I was raised in a very accommodating community. No matter whether it was women with high job-positions, or homosexuals. To me, everything was fine. And therefore, of course, it was a bit idealized, but I perceived the Western world as being very cooperative, and I have always felt like belonging to one big community. And when it comes to Europe, one big Europe with fluid borders. That was something I could identify myself with (27.40)

Claus

C: Yes, you're right. We don't think about it. It is like driving to a neighboring village. It is a fluid border. We first realized it now, once we had the closing of the border due to the corona-virus. Otherwise, we have not had any border. There is not such a great difference. But there are large cultural difference in terms of whether you drive five km towards the south, or if you don't. The school-system, culturally, and also the construction of buildings. Everything changes within five km (06.30)

E: And what about the border-control in 2016. How was the reaction in the local community, and how was your own reaction? (06.50)

C: I was happy for it. Because we didn't experience it in any way. And, at the same time, if it helps in terms of getting the right persons over, then it's fine. The free border would still be there. I mean, just because you have to go to a control, if you have a clear conscience, then it is out of no importance. However, our question in my local community is whether it actually has an effect. This is what our discussion is about in the local community. We don't mind the border-control. So it is more related to if it has any effect at all (07.20).

E: What do you think about it yourself. Does it have any effects? (07.25)

C: I don't think it has an effect. If you want to cross, or at least for us who live in the area, we can always cross, at any time. I promise you. It doesn't demand much to get over. Have you seen the amount of border crossings. I think it is somewhere between twenty and twenty-five (07.55)

E: Okay, so the prior cause for implementing the border-control was actually reasonable? I mean, with the migrants and refugees coming. But now, in comparison to at the time, it is much more unclear when it comes to what the effect is? (08.10)

C: Yes. When we closed it in 2016, we were talking about if it had any effect. But today it has a real effect, because they don't come any more (08.35)

Jakob

E: Okay, and this is perhaps also one reason for criticizing the EU. That they are not present enough in these areas? (31.50)

J: Yes, and then we always hear about the bad stories. What is the money spent on, and so on. This is something people understand and can relate to. It is the same with populism, people understand what is being said. It is perhaps the same with the EU, but the difference is that people do not have the same kind of prior knowledge. You don't hear about the positive elements. Then it is easy to have a sceptical view towards the EU. But personally speaking, I think we should be happy for having the EU. Peace, cooperation and so on. This is something which I hope will endure (33.00)

E: So, you also think, amidst this corona-crisis, that we should stand together and be more solidary with each other? (33.05)

J: Yes, definitely. The alternative would not be preferable. It is important to keep it (33.25)

E: Yes, and one could probably also say that if they don't receive any help in Southern Europe, then the Danes will also be affected. Their travels, and also the Italians' travels (33.35)

J: It is quite critical. When you look at some of the fools that reign in different parts of Europe. There are some features resembling the 30s. You don't only need to think about Trump, there are also others. Boris Johnson also has his odd personal traits. I hope that we have become smarter, but sometimes it is easy to believe that the opposite is true. The history should make one smarter. But perhaps it is too far away from us, so people have forgotten it. The generations that could remind of us how it was, they are now gone. In the context of this year's 75ᵗʰ anniversary of the liberation, some of the old stories surface in the media. And when you interview some of those who are still alive, then you are being reminded of it again (34.50)

E: Okay, and before we end. How do you think the border-control will look like in the future? (35.10)

Lampedusa (Rino, Claudia, Paola)

Rino

R: People on Lampedusa do not want to feel African. They want to feel European. But, there is no European spirit. In the sense that if a guy from Lampedusa went to Milano, or Rome, or Napoli, where there are a lot of foreigners, he would not feel well. Because, here on Lampedusa, the foreigners arrive, but they do not come here to live. Once, it was like this, but now they remain closed. For people from Lampedusa, with all respect for the place which is hosting me, tourists are all right. They bring you money. The migrants do not bring anything, according to them. They have fear, they are afraid of the migrants (16.30)

E: It is very interesting what you are saying. I have seen documentaries about Lampedusa. In the documentary, people from Lampedusa underline how the journalists arrive on the island, but they do not cover all there is to know about the island. What do you think about that? (17.35)

R: When there are news on Lampedusa. Something about the migrants, for instance, if they have stolen something, or if a politician comes to be seen or to say something, then the journalists arrive. Lampedusa is a place, which has an interesting connotation. For instance, if you say Emil from Lampedusa, and not just Emil, it is much more interesting. So, Lampedusa revokes a lot of different interests. I apologize for the comparison that I now am going to make. But when there is a dog-shit on the earth-soil, you see the flies that are hovering above. Here on Lampedusa, when the journalist arrive, they are like the flies that smell the shit on the earth-soil. When there is something to write, or something to say. This spring, when we have made manifestations for the migrants, there have been a lot of journalists. And we have received tons of stupid questions. We have even received journalists from commercial TV-stations (19.10)

E: What do they ask you? (19.15)

Claudia

need to work with the community and for the community. Especially with the community. We also receive a lot of researchers like you, because people want to collect data from here. However, we also cooperate with NGOs that rescue people on the sea. We send volunteers into the boats with the migrants. In January, we sent a doctor out to the arriving boats (17.10)

E: In regard to what you are saying, I have read books and articles about the situation. And there is one common pattern, namely, the lack of help from the Italian state and the European Union. Can you explain me how your work has been received on the island after the arrival of MH in 2013? (17.40)

C: It's not easy to explain this shadow. Because here, we are full of shadows. Every day you have a new alliance, so, it could that for months you are completely integrated in the community, it could also be that you don't are accepted for other reasons. Here, the people suffer from the sense and feeling of abandonment from the Italian state and Europe. The Lampedusan people do not feel or sense Europe. We don't have any perception of Europe here. So, people put all things together. We don't have a hospital, we have lots of migrants, we are in the middle of the sea, and so on. So, every problem is put together. This means that even when people are comfortable, they use the problem of migration and health-care. So, sometimes people are confused. You can imagine how people suffer from this. I mean, if you are a tourist, then it is all right, but if you are a migrant, it is not okay. And, this is the problem. Generally speaking, we are accepted because we now know the community. But, in 2014, we spent months and months with a very low profile approach. We were listening to people, and speaking to people. We were listening to their stories in order to understand their them. This is the basic level if you want to enter the community. We are only twenty square kilometers here. So, it is a very small island. And here, I have friends who have been living on the island for more than twenty years. They are still seen as foreigners, because they were not born on Lampedusa (21.20)

Paola

Everybody would know what you think. If you live in a big city, it could be that nobody would knew about it. Here, it is quite impossible. So, you can count it when it comes to how many people are for or against something. That's all (30.50)

E: Okay, I wanted to ask you a more general question about identity. You said that after 2013, people became more aware of the us and them distinctions. But, do you think that if there had been help from Europe or Italy, it could have been prevented in any way? Could there be done something? (33.20)

P: Of course. This is what didn't happen, but should have happened. Just to give you the picture in numbers. In 2011, it was six thousands of us as a population, ten thousands migrants, so, it was almost the double of the population. Can you tell me if there is a place anywhere in the world, where the local authorities would have let this happen? I mean, the arriving guys were not bad people. Otherwise, it would have been like hell. Imagine, I mean, you cannot really suppose that there are not bad people among ten thousand. This is just statistics. So, all of us, I mean, here on the island, we started thinking about whether the authorities would have let this happen in the outskirts of Rome, or Milano. And, the answer was no. So, people's reaction in the aftermath was, in a way, shaped by how the Italian and European authorities managed the situation. At a certain point, it became clear that there was a specific policy to keep every single migrant on the island, not only the Tunisian ones, as long as possible, because it was better for everybody. Because, you don't want these people to walk around in your cities, you don't want them to create problems anywhere else. No European country wants to take charge of these people. This was the moment in which the European buildings really started falling apart. It was clear that it was not really Europe. I mean, culturally, yes, and also with the currency. We all have Euros. But, politically and financially, it was like one country, and one island, running for itself. Even if some help has been offered afterwards. But, do you know how clever it was from Merkel's point of view to accept one million of well-educated Syrians. It was a beautiful gesture, but you know, if you want to save people, you need to save every single one of them, not only the well-educated ones, who can give more prestige to your country. You need to help the last ones. I mean, a young guy who is sixteen or fifteen years old,