ERASMUS UNIVERSITEIT ROTTERDAM

Who is welcome here?

A qualitative discourse analysis, from a decolonial perspective, on the media discourse of Ukrainian refugees

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Abstract

This thesis looks, through a decolonial perspective, into the major discourses on Ukrainian refugees presented by British newspapers. This study used a dataset of 60 articles, published by 5 different British newspapers, from the 24th of february 2022 up until the 10th of march 2022. By conducting qualitative discourse analysis, three major discourses were found within the dataset. The most prevalent discourse that emerged from the dataset was one of personalisation, providing agency and personal backgrounds of the discussed refugees. The second most common discourse was a humanitarian one that emphasized and promoted its society's selfless assistance and individual contributions to a welcoming culture for Ukrainian refugees. The last discourse that was prevalent, especially in the center-right publications that were part of this dataset, was the astonishment factor that a "crisis" like this was happening within Europe; to Europeans. The portrayals of earlier refugees compared to Ukrainian refugees, who are largely seen as having this imagined white European identity, stand in stark contrast to earlier research. This contrast plays into dichotomous colonial narratives. This leads to a comprehension of how the media supports the global racial hierarchy that colonialism and imperialism imposed.

KEYWORDS: Media discourse, Ukrainian, Refugees, Decoloniality, Framing, British Media, Critical discourse analysis, United Kingdom

1. Introduction

This master thesis aims at examining the initial media discourse on Ukrainian refugees, resulting from the recent Russo-Ukrainian war, by utilising a critical discourse analysis of British newspaper coverage. After months of high concerns of a potential invasion, Russia launched its military invasion of Ukraine on the 24th of February 2022, causing over 900 civilian casualties[1] and creating over three million Ukrainian refugees[2] in a little more than 3 weeks since the war started. Europe's initial response to this influx of refugees has in general been one of open arms. The UK for example started a scheme called 'Homes for Ukraine', in which British citizens are able to state if they would be able to host a Ukrainian refugee in their home or a property they own[3]. In neighbouring countries Belgium and the Netherlands, media have reported that the Royal families have claimed to host Ukrainian refugees in royal owned properties. Denmark reacted swiftly to approve laws that will allow Ukrainian migrants to seek temporary residency in Denmark, thereby skipping their lengthy asylum procedure. However, only two years earlier, Denmark's government tried to deport refugees back to regions within Syria, where they feared to face incarceration and death, at the hands of Russian-backed troops (Ahmad, 2022). It is interesting to notice a different sentiment and response when compared to the general response of the influx of refugees in 2015, whereby 1.3 million people came to the continent to seek asylum within a year (Gruessing & Boomgarden, 2017). This influx of refugees is generally spoken of as 'the refugee crisis of 2015'.

The Russo-Ukrainian war and its subsequent effects, like the refugee-influx, have been extensively covered by global news outlets. How these topics are spoken of and what news frame is being used, has a large impact on the perception of an issue by the larger public. News frames are used to draw attention to specific components of a story and make them more prominent in the eyes of viewers (Entman, 1994). A frame will set the tone for the entire piece, and while frames aren't inherently bad, they can only provide a partial picture of an event or topic (ibid). The ability of the media to create representations of certain groups or an 'issue', which then act as models of the 'normal' and so impact people's future perception, is a component of the media's power (Van Dijk, 1995). There is no one-way causal connection between media

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[1] https://www.statista.com/statistics/1293492/ukraine-war-casualties/
[2] https://www.statista.com/statistics/1293403/cee-ukrainian-refugees-by-country/
[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-launches

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discourse and the public opinion; instead; there is a mutual interaction in which each individual's sense-making is incorporated into the media discourse, which is in turn based on the public's opinions (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

In previous research on the media discourse of refugees in Europe, Gruessing & Boomgaarden (2017) looked into the most dominant frames employed in the coverage of refugee and asylum issues within the year 2015. Apart from discussing administrative issues of dealing with the arrivals, they discovered that preexisting storylines of security threats and expenses were most prevalent. Humanitarian frames and frames that highlighted the actual situation of the refugees, were included to a far lesser extent. Their research demonstrated how dominant stereotypical views of refugees and asylum seekers were produced in media sources by adopting specific frames.

Within the initial response after the invasion, specific racialized news frames were spotted in various media outlets, contrasting Ukrainian refugees to 'other' refugees. Quotes like "*Now the unthinkable has happened to them, and this is not a developing, third world nation, this is Europe"* [4], or *"We are in the 21st century, we are in a European city and we have cruise missile fire as though we were in Iraq or Afghanistan, can you imagine!?"* [5], exemplified how tragedy outside of Europe has been normalised by referring to 'the developing world' as a place where 'the unthinkable' is bound to happen. The next quotes exemplifies how these refugees are then set apart from other refugees, ultimately tying their particularity as 'unimaginable' refugees to their racial categorization. "*It's very emotional for me because I see European people with blue eyes and blonde hair being killed"* [6] or "*To put it bluntly, these are not refugees from Syria, these are refugees from Ukraine.. They're Christians, they're white, They're very similar to us*" [7] Immediately there is an idea created of who the 'we' is that belongs within Europe. That they apparently have white skin and uphold Christian values.

These examples all derive from visual news reports, where this very direct level of racial framing was noticed and critiqued by mostly non-dominant news resources. Visual media outlets are not subject to the same level of layers of review, as a written report is, due to its live-component. This research focused on the analysis of written news articles only, in which we

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[4] ITV News, 27 february 2022
[5] BFM TV, 22 february 2022
[6] BBC News, 26 february 2022
[7] NBC News, 27 February 2022

could have expected a lesser level of direct racial framing or othering, or at least have it more disguised, due to the multiple layers of review written reports go through. But by looking into what type of discourses were most prevalent and by contextualising that within a larger body of research on refugee discourses in the media, this research aimed to answer the following research question: "What major discourses can be identified, by looking through a decolonial perspective, on the representation of Ukrainian refugees within British newspapers?"

This research choses to focus on one country, instead of choosing multiple countries, this due to time-constraints and accessibility. Therefore this research isn't generalizable enough to speak of a 'Western' or 'European' discourse, but limits its findings on the United Kingdom. As this is a very current and developing issue, its academic relevance can be deemed as high, to add to the already existing body of literature on refugee media discourses in Europe, but focusing on a 'new' and different category amongst refugees. As for societal relevance, I deem it important to always look into underlying racial/colonial structures within our societies. In doing so, this humbles its narratives and exposes its injustices and material effects, thereby opening the doorway for narratives that have not been able to breathe in a world that suffocates any narrative outside of its colonial structure.

2. Theoretical framework

This research engages with larger theoretical approaches of framing theory and decolonial theory and with theories such as critical whiteness theory, orientalism and racial regionalization, that within this chapter will be introduced and discussed. This together will constitute a well-rounded framework that helps examine the media discourse on Ukrainian refugees in the British press.

<u>2.1 Creating a discourse</u>

It is crucial to look into framing and discourse theory, to understand the effect of the way themes (e.g. refugees and migration) are discussed in the media and what frames are being employed on the perception of the general public.

 Framing is a strategy that is frequently used, particularly by the media. What framing really comprises is defined in a wide variety of ways, although many of these definitions have the same traits. According to Entman (2007), framing entails choosing various elements of the observed reality and choosing for them to be highlighted more prominently in a text. Additionally, framing is regarded as a specific method through which journalists create news articles in order to maximise audience accessibility (Valkenburg, Semetko & de Vreese, 1999). Framing thereby creates a narrative that presents and supports one certain view of a given problem (Fryberg et. Al 2012), by emphasising some parts of reality while disregarding others, a frame can influence a person's perception of an issue (Lecheler & de Vreese, 2012). To sway audience interpretations, societal and media discourse frequently caters to a certain fundamental framework. The following quote of Edelman (1993) captures the above mentioned quite nicely: "*The social world is a kaleidoscope of potential realities, any of which can be readily evoked by altering the way in which observations are framed and categorised* " (p. 232). Discourse, a sophisticated process of social interaction that involves language usage, interpretation, and text generation, is therefore seen as a source of power in society (Fairclough, 1989). In other words, through supporting ideologies as coordinating frames for certain interpretations of reality, language may exert influence in terms of fostering consensus regarding events (Fairclough, 1989; Van Dijk, 1991). Discourse can be contested despite its strength. According to Foucault (1989) hegemony can never be total, as there is always room inside a discourse for opposing its prevailing meanings. It is therefore possible to deconstruct popular media discourses by

counter-reading them in order to identify the linguistic tactics that support the development of public-shared cognitions.

2.2 Whiteness in a colonised world

The colonised world is often described as a dualistic one; a Manichaean system in which "*the coloniser is one who embodies all good and the colonised all evil*", as Fanon (1961) puts it. A fundamental social classification that divides these worlds is race. For the definition of Race, I refer to the definition of dr. Maulana Karenga, edited by peoples Institute and crossroads, seeing race as a "classification devised by Europeans during the period of global colonial expansion to assign human worth and social rank, using themselves as the model of humanity, in order to legitimise white supremacy and privilege" (Ramsey County Human Services Anti-Racism Leadership Team, 2013). To look into the longstanding effects of colonisation, we turn to decolonial theory. Decolonial theories generally refer to the school of thought that focuses on disentangling the epistemology of Western knowledge production and criticising its presumed universality and the corresponding dominance of Western culture and that which it creates. Within this school of thought I primarily focused on the theory of decoloniality, and used that as my primary lens in order to unpack the found discourses within news reports on Ukrainian refugees fleeing the Russo-Ukrainian war. Decoloniality could be described as the structural basis in the world that tries to justify existing exploitation systems by European forces of dominance, of the world and its resources (Mignolo, 2015). The praxis of decoloniality starts with being aware of the fact that modernity does not exist without coloniality, therefore it bases itself on the compound concept of 'modernity/coloniality' (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018)**.** This expression is written in this particular way to show the importance of understanding that coloniality does not derive from modernity, but that it is foundational to modernity itself i.e. that the "*history of Western civilization cannot be accounted for without the violence of coloniality*" (Mignolo & Walsh , 2018, P.32). As if to say that these are two sides of the same coin. In the place of (dis)juncture between modernity and coloniality is what is described as the 'colonial difference' (Vazquez, 2018), to dwell within that space allows us to see how the modern worldview is complicit with coloniality. It is within that space that I aim to situate myself in order to untangle colonial narratives within media discourses and decolonial theory helps resurface these underlying structures.

The sense of superiority of the coloniser is largely dependent on the imagination of the 'other' as barbaric and uncivilised. The colonial encounter requires the 'colonised' to be reinvented and the past to be deliberately deconstructed. "*It is the coloniser who fabricated and continues to fabricate the colonised subject*" (Fanon,1961, p.2). Within this imagination of the colonised, narrative-formation and linguistics play an important tool in constructing these ideas. Fanon also underlines this by saying: "*when the colonist speaks of the colonised he used zoological terms. In his endeavours at description and finding the right word, the colonist refers to the bestiary*" (Ibid, p.7). This mental construction of human categorization expresses the foundation of colonial dominance and continues to be an essential aspect of global power and its rationality i.e. Eurocentrism. This racial axis thus has a colonial origin, but has become a far more solid structure than the structure of political colonialism.

The imaginative constructions of the 'other', the colonised, within the colonised world, of which it discourses still operates, is seen through the theorisation of orientalism. The persistence of orientalist representations shows how the structures of the colonial machinery endures in underlying structures. The total of the West's image of the Orient and its profound repercussions is referred to as Orientalism (Said, 1978). Orientalism ties into the idea of a Manichaean world, and shows how a Western worldview emphases the binary distinction between the Occident and Orient, whereby the orient is imagined as all that the West is not, its 'alter ego' (Said, 1978). Thereby orientalism shapes how people view 'the other' by reducing the orient to a stereotype, causing their humanity to be overlooked, but moreover how they view themselves. It must be remembered that for those in the West, orientalism is first and primarily a constructed phenomenon, a collection of images, methods of seeing and thinking that come to stand in for truth, as the Orient's reality. Although orientalism is mainly imaginative, it has tangible consequences (McLeod, 2010). Media is one way these fabricated ideas come into effect, maintaining a social paradigm of racially categorised hierarchies. Etman (1994) describes how news reproduces racism not because readers agree with what is reported, but because the media manufactures a racial consensus in which the range of thoughts and attitudes are very rigorously controlled. They then not only set the tone for public debate (what people should think about), but also strongly imply how readers should think about and discuss racial/ethnic relations.

The power that the conceptualization of race holds is always situated within a specific context of the geopolitical region it is embedded in. Goldberg (2006) introduces the concept of racial regionalization that refers to the regionally registered racisms that are linked to their dominant state formations. In the case of Europe, he speaks of Racial Europeanization. In Europe there is this depiction that race is no longer a point of concern, we do not speak of race, as if to say it's no longer here. That we act as if race is no longer an issue, does not mean its effects are not as real. Goldberg (2006) goes on explaining how the Holocaust within Europe's imagination was its defining event of race and racially inscribed histories. Afterward the holocaust, race should have no social place whatsoever. By narrowing down its racial past to one specific historical catastrophe, is causing its history of colonialism to get erased from its memory as one belonging to Europe. It is said to have happened somewhere else, outside of European history. Thereby failing to comprehend how colonial experiences shaped contemporary Europe. Race in Europe has been made invisible and not to speak of, but still noticeable by the senses. Racial Europeanization is thereby preoccupied with racial avoidance as denial or at the very least unwillingness to recognize its own consequences (ibid). Within the West, whiteness would be regarded as the norm, whereby white individuals are perceived as representatives of the general human. Instead, non-Whites are racially designated and can only speak for their own race (Dyer, 1997). Whiteness has a tremendous invisible normalcy, in which its powerful position as being the norm allows for a continuation of the status quo (ibid). Whiteness refers to "*the discursive practices that because of colonialism and neo-colonialism, privilege and sustain the global dominance of white imperial subjects and Eurocentric worldviews*" rather than merely skin colour (Shome, 1999, p. 108). As a result, "*beliefs, policies, and actions (often unarticulated) that enable whites to maintain power*" make up the ideology of whiteness (Dlamini, 2002, p. 58). According to Frankenberg (1995, p. 16–17), "*Central to colonial discourses is the notion of the colonised subject as irreducibly other from the standpoint of a white 'self'*". The Western self is generated as a result of the way in which the west produces its 'others' through discursive means, distinguishing a variety of cultural and racial 'Others' as distinct from a seemingly consistent western or white self. This implies that the Western self and the non-wWestern other are jointly formed as discursive products, and that both of their "realnesses" are entangled in a web of links with the creation of knowledge and the forms of physical violence that are closely related to "epistemic violence." (1993, Frankenberg, pp. 16–17) "

3. Research design

The methods and forms of analysis that will be used within this research in order to answer the proposed research question of "What major discourses can be identified, by looking through a decolonial perspective, on the representation of Ukrainian refugees within British newspapers?" will be outlined within this chapter

3.1 Methodology

This research will use critical discourse analysis (CDA) to interpret news reports that cover the topic of Ukrainian refugees.The focus of critical discourse analysis is on language's power dynamics and disparities (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). CDA can offer us insights into the way language is used in the British press. Bryman (2016, p.536) notes how CDA emphasises the role of language as a power resource that is related to ideology and socio-cultural change. Analysing discourse involves asking 'who uses language, how and when' (Van Dijk, 1997). A discourse thereby does not just provide an account of what goes on in society, it is also a process whereby meaning is created (ibid). Bryman (2016) describes a three-dimensional framework. The CDA calls attention to and condemns the use of language that benefits the dominant group. CDA has been frequently adopted in previous research on the portrayal of refugees in the media (e.g. Van Dijk, 1991; Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; Berry et al. 2015). The research aimed to elucidate underlying ideological connotations and delve deeply into the discourse of media materials; this objective is difficult to accomplish using any quantitative approach. Since a quantitative type of content analysis, even when useful, favours the possibility of generalisation to the detriment of a deeper understanding of the studied material. This research did not aim to quantify a large amount of data in order to draw conclusions about the overall image of Ukrainian refugees in the British press. In other words, the study's aim was not in counting the number of frames in the articles' respective themes, but rather in examining the discourse's structure and illuminating latent meanings that could be obscured by the explicit surface analysis in quantitative research.

<u>3.2 Data collection</u>

The data of this research was derived from five British newspapers: The Guardian, The Daily Mail, The Daily Telegraph, The mirror and The Sun, which collectively reflect the left and right wing political spectrums. These publications were selected due to their high circulation rates and reputation in the UK. An equal number of articles were picked from each newspaper. The study excluded accompanying graphics like photos, drawings, or graphs.Via the database of UniNexis (formerly known as LexisNexis), non-random selection of articles was done by using search terms about Ukrainian refugees from one of the chosen news sources, and choosing the top 12 items per newspaper from the results. On UniNexis, the following search phrases were entered: Ukraine AND Refugee. The other requirements on LexisNexis were as follows: the search type was words and connectors, the date range had to be between February 24 and March 10, 2022, and 'newspapers' had to be chosen. As a result, 1756 articles were collected as data, and 60 articles were ultimately selected and analyzed in Atlas.ie. The chosen articles had to discuss refugees as their primary subject and at least half of the article had to discuss Ukrainian refugees. In order to meet these criteria, the article should discuss the refugees already in the title or the introduction

<u>3.3 Analysis</u>

After the samples were collected, the analysis phase (using Atlas.ti) started, in which a 5-point analytical CDA approach was utilised to look for common themes in the data.   This included referential (naming), predicational (attribution) and argumentative strategies, and perspectivization, mitigation, and intensification (PMI) methods, all of which are pertinent to the objectives and focus of this current research. Reisigl & Wodak (2009, p. 13) stated the 5 point analytical method best as questions: How are people, things, phenomena/events, processes, and acts linguistically named and referred to? What traits, attributes, or characteristics are ascribed to social actors, things, occurrences, events, or processes? What arguments are used in the contested discourse? What viewpoints are reflected in these nominations, attributions, and arguments? Are the corresponding statements explicitly articulated; Are they emphasised or downplayed? Van Leeuwen's (1996) socio-semantic approach to CDA is incorporated into this 5-point analytical framework and maintains that socio-semantic categorizations and the representations of various social actors must be taken into account by connecting these socio-semantic categories with their

linguistic realisations. The socio-semantic categorization developed by Van Leeuwen (1996, p.66) operates at the local intra-textual level and may be used with the previously indicated 5-point analytical framework. Foregrounding/Backgrounding, Passivation/Activation, Personalization/Impersonalization, Individualization/Assimilation, and Functionalization are some of Van Leeuwen's themes that are particularly relevant for this research. A second round of study, which connected to the previously described theory, looked at the relevance and divergent features of these discursive practices within a larger body of research on media discourses of refugees.

 3.4 Positionality & Ethics

In this study, there were no human participants. All used articles were accessible via NexisUni. Since the used data originated from a publicly accessible database and no private information was collected, it was not essential to maintain the individuals' confidentiality or anonymity. Appendix II includes a checklist of privacy and ethical considerations for this study.

4. Refugees in the (British) media

This body of research falls within a larger category of migration and media studies literature that focuses on the portrayal of refugees (e.g. Van Dijk, 1991; Chouliaraki & Zaborowski, 2017; Berry et al. 2015). Therefore this section engages with a couple of other studies and discusses its major findings. This field is defined by a strong critical perspective on the language used to describe the refugee in a variety of public genres.

Previous works contend that the refugee always appears as a fundamentally ambiguous figure hovering somewhere between victimization and malice. In other words, the refugee is both a victim of war and strife who needs protection and a danger to "our" sense of community (Moore et al, 2012). Such contradictory representations, ultimately never escape the orientalist presuppositions that seem to sustain a Western conception of the refugee as a voice of the "other" since they are caught between these fluid identities (Malkki, 1996). Firstly, by focusing only on a person's physical frailty as their distinguishing characteristic robs them of the opportunity to express their own free choice and reasoned arguments, reducing them to the status of "sub-citizens" (Hyndman, 2000). The media creates a dichotomy between those who are capable and active on the one hand, and those who are in danger, a drain on resources, or incapable on the other. We see fanon's colonial universe of an orderly 'us' and an interior and dangerous 'them'continuing in the present. Thus, media discourse upholds the racial hierarchy that colonialism and imperialism created over the world. Contrary to colonial discourses, which established racial hierarchy in the colonies, modern media discourse help perpetuate colonial epistemology at home and outside of the colonies. It creates racialized populations on domestic territory (Polonska-Kimunguyi, 2022).

Secondly, by portraying people as a nameless bulk, their own human history is being overshadowed (Nyers, 1999). According to Khosravinik's (2010) research, liberal newspapers tend to be more individualistic and humanizing, whereas conservative media tend to be more aggregator-prone. According to KhosraviNik (2010), media tend to offer greater space to "in group" or native viewpoints, which causes othering, regardless of their style or political stance. According to this literature (ibid), different language approaches lead the refugee to be "voiceless"—not just mute but also isolated from reason and history and, eventually, from the human order—because they prevent them from speaking.

5. Findings & Analysis

This section presents the three main discourses found when analysing the collected data and discusses these discursive practices by contextualising and contrasting them within a wider body of research, while situating them within the earlier discussed theoretical framework.

5.1. The story behind 'a refugee'

The most prevalent discourse that emerged from the dataset was one of personalisation. The news reports made it very clear who 'Ukrainian refugees' were. Overwhelmingly they were not referred to as just 'refugees', as a category, defined by their circumstances. But as people, people with families, people who carried out various roles in their lives, people who have lifes to go back to, a life that is often mentioned and referred to when describing their situation e.g. "*Monica's real career is on hold for now. Her flat in Lviv is abandoned and the plants she lovingly cared for are dying*"[S6], "*Her whole life that she had built will most likely not be there whenever she gets back*"[S1]. Most articles incorporated at least a part of the background stories of the refugees they were talking to, and some dedicated entire pieces on one specific refugee-story (eg."*One minute I'm preparing for Paris Fashion week, the next I'm fleeing Ukraine as a war refugee*"[T1]). As said, most articles incorporated at least a small part of the background stories of the mentioned refugees, always appearing with their personal names (if willing to give), ages and profession or other roles they held in their life. In which they were very much characterised as productive citizens **(***e.g. biologist; ex-child care worker; chiropodist; accountant; medical student; HR worker; teacher***).** That the emphasis is on the latter is exemplified in the following quote:

> "*The fundamental lesson of the crisis, he said, was that the refugees fleeing Ukraine were from all walks of life. "They are journalists, charity workers, teachers, business people, housewives, physical trainers, accountants, pensioners - people who a week ago were leading perfectly normal lives are now on the run*"[G3]

But even when being discussed as a group, next to directly calling them Ukrainian refugees (often when referring to a large numbers of refugees), a variety of other terms were also often used to discuss a group of Ukrainian refugees, some examples of these were "*displaced people*[D10]", "*Families fleeing*[T12]", "*Ukrainian victims of war seeking refugee*[D9]", "*Ukrainians fleeing*[G5]", "*Ukrainians seeking refugee*[S4]",

This discourse holds place for personalised storytelling, that holds a very actor-centred approach by letting Ukrainian refugees speak for themselves, using extensive quotations. This contributes to the appearance of authenticity and 'realness' of the described scenario. By granting them their agency, they had the power to either explain their current situation themselves, or talk of that which they had to leave behind, without being re-worded by an intermediary (eg. "*Waiting for their train out of the city, the Russian bombardment grew more intense. When it was announced that a train for Kyiv was leaving, they made a rush for it, managing to clamber aboard with minutes to spare*"[T4]). This also allows the reader to get closer to the refugee, by being able to read their emotionsre, which directly humanises them (e.g."*a mix of relief, exhaustion, and grief*"[S1], "*I feel super lost*[S6], *I am very upset and depressed*"[S8], "*I'm frightened*"[S6]).

This discourse of the personalisation of a refugee and granting them agency, contrasts earlier research on refugee media discourses, in which refugees are often seen as voiceless, in which "n*ews coverage paints 'migrants' or 'refugees' as silent, in which they do not speak for themselves*", (Polonska-Kimunguyi, 2022, p.6) , even though they were at the centre of the debate. By having refugees talked of as a highly collectivised group, refugees transform into a "faceless mass" (Penny, 2015). By being only regarded as a number, or an anonymous mass, causes refugees to be dehumanized (Nyers, 1999). This causes them to be lumped together as 'foreign entrants'.

The fact that this discourse of individualization is also the dominant discourse among the conservatives papers within this research, is extra noteworthy. As earlier research stated that: "*conservative accounts hardly recognise these groups with their names or other qualities unless they can be positioned inside, or adjacent to, a negative topos*" (KhosraviNik, 2011, p.15). This dichotomous representation of 'other' refugees in comparison to Ukrainian refugees, goes back to the duality of a manichaean system and the concept of coloniality. As was already mentioned, such speech separates people according to their worth. As observed in earlier studies on refugees,

it is developed inside the baggage of the colonial past and mimics the vocabulary of danger, aggressiveness, and malice. It also produces a scary "other" that inspires fear.

In opposition to that, also playing into this colonial narrative, is the narrative of personalisation, and privilege of being seen as an individual. A privilege that is ascribed to the occident, to whiteness: "*to be white enables one to retain a sense of individuality, while barring people of colour from exercising that same right*" (Lindner, 2018). Whiteness itself is never a constant characteristic, but instead "*a category that people can move in and out of during the process of racialization*" (Sime et al. 2022). Even though Eastern-Europeanness has been characterized with having a form 'ambiguous whiteness' (Lapina & Vertelyte, 2020), we see that when in need to be contrasted to 'the orient', their whiteness / Europeanness becomes foregrounded and the discourse presented plays into this. This dichotomy upholds coloniality, the cognitive categorization of populations that results in a hierarchy of individuals, bodies of knowledge, and cultures (Quijano, 2000) and propels imperial institutions into the modern age.

5.2 "Our message must be clear: Ukrainian victims of war seeking refuge are welcome!"[DM9]

The second most prevalent discourse within the dataset was a humanitarian frame, which highlighted and encouraged its society's voluntary help and their personal contribution to a welcoming culture towards Ukrainian refugees. The discourse found here was very much one that expected the reader to help Ukrainian refugees, as it ought be the moral thing to do, thus calling for a humanitarian stance in the public discourse. The language used, was one of expectations, an expected solidarity and compassion e.g. "*For surely, no one can fail to be moved by the heartbreaking images and stories of families – mostly women, children, the infirm and elderly - fleeing from Russia's invading armed force*s"[DM5]. This frame was shared across the entire scope of newspapers, all having papers that presented this discourse specifically within their headlines (e.g. ""*The Guardian view on welcoming refugees from Ukraine: Britain must do more*"[G1],"*How to host Ukrainian refugees in UK*"[s4], "*Give till it hurts*"[DM4], "*A noble and correct thing to do*"[T3], "*Ukraine humanitarian crisis: what is the most effective way to help*" [G11]. "*Your help could be vital in saving the vulnerable millions*"[M1] .

"*Of course we will play our part in the international humanitarian response*"[T2]. This overwhelming humanitarian stance in the public discourse, presented by the newspapers, called

for a lot of articles to critique Britain's governmental stance and regulations towards Ukrainian refugees. At the initial response of the influx of Ukrainian refugees throughout Europe, the U.K. was starting to set up various visa-schemes that allowed Ukrainians with family in the UK to apply for the family scheme or other Ukrainians for a sponsorship scheme. The articles critiquing the works of the government, focused on the fact that the realities of these schemes didn't work out as well as the 'welcoming' language that was used by politicians implied.

> *"It is not enough to say that they are welcoming Ukrainian refugees, they need to put everything in place to make it technically possible for them to secure visas, or provisionally cancel the need for visa and create a system that would allow them to apply on arrival in the UK"*[G7]

"*So many ordinary people are doing incredible things to help but this Government is continuing to put policy and paperwork over people*"[M5] ; "*the attitude of the UK Government was different from that of its citizens*[S8]. As strong as the critique on the works of the government, **as big w**as the praising of individuals who stepped up and voluntarily helped out in various ways (e.g. '*'British schindler' guides 270 refugee orphans out of Ukraine to safety*'[T10].)

These research's findings are in contrast to past studies on the media discourse of refugees, which placed humanitarian frames at the background and painted migrants negatively as a "threat" to the economies, cultures, and security of host nations (Gruessing & Boomgaarden, 2017, Jacobs et. Al., 2016). This theory of security threats supports racialized biopolitics, which disallows some groups from participating in nation-building, encourages racial profiling and surveillance, justifies the use of physical boundaries, restricts freedom of speech and political participation, and encourages internal strife within the oppressed group (Polonska-Kimunguyi, 2022).The newspapers draw on an earlier colonial division of people into "compartments" where the "native town" was "starved of bread" and "populated by men of foul reputation" and the "settler zone" was dominated by "good behavior" and "respect for the established order" (Fanon, 1961, pp. 37–39). Racialized communities were denied access to resources, healthcare, safety, and opportunities by colonialism, leaving them susceptible to violence and early death (El-Enany, 2020; Mamdani, 2018). Despite being supported by actual resources, this colonial system was created through rhetoric. Hierarchies and imperial identities were created and

maintained with the aid of the power of language. It is interesting to note that when refugees with a perceived 'white' European identity are being discussed, this threat-narrative is absent and a humanitarian discourse is pushed instead. As mentioned, racist/orientalist narratives, although imaginative, hold tangible consequences (McLeod,2010). We see this when through the absence of a threat-narrative and the push of a humanitarian frame, people are encouraged to help out and take an oppositional stance to policies that are not in line with these 'welcoming' attitudes.

A small number of articles, (center-left) did mention the difference of attitudes throughout Europe from various countries towards ukrainian refugees, compared to earlier influxes of refugees, but missed a deeper critique onto why, and highlighted it more as an opportunistic moment to act better. **"*The extraordinary waking up of Europe over the last week" that had produced rare unity on the refugee question that previously did not exist, It's vital to capitalise on that." Europe is not going to be overwhelmed by Ukrainians even if 5m of them come through*[G3]" , or "*There's no question that governments in Poland and Hungary took a very negative view of European responsibility towards Syrian refugees. But my point is, let's build on the present unity*"[G3].

5.3 European war?!

The last discourse that was prevalent, predominantly in the center-right newspapers included in this dataset, was an astonishment factor over the fact that a 'crisis' like this is happening within Europe; to Europeans. "*Of course we all watched the footage of Syrian and Afghani refugees, but we all thought this just can't happen in this city of ours that's always written up in travel articles as a new Berlin.*"[T1], "*They seem so like us. That is what makes it so shocking*"[S6], "*Ukraine is a European country. Its people watch Netflix and have Instagram accounts, vote in free elections and read uncensored newspapers. War is no longer something visited upon impoverished and remote populations. It can happen to anyone*"[T6]**.** This exemplifies how tragedy outside of Europe has been normalized by referring to '*remote populations*' as places where war and tragedy are bound to happen. And a country like Europe, a city 'as new as berlin', that is described as being similar in levels of modernity and political values (e.g. "*We share Ukrainian ideals of freedom, democracy and independence. We must not and cannot allow those ideals to be trampled on and crushed*"[M7]), is a place where war and tragedy should be foreign. These narratives on how

'shocking' it is that people who 'seem so like us' are now facing a war and where many had to forcefully become refugees, shows that racism is strongly *ingrained* in our European society, in which we *marginalize everything that is not 'like us'* and it also exposes how the media devalues conflicts in non-European places.

The narrative that war and tragedy should somehow be foreign to the European continent, shows a particular historical amnesia within these narratives. But Europe has been able to successfully separate itself from 'the combat' in terms of its collective consciousness. During the first half of the 20th century, there were numerous conflicts all over the world, many of them connected to the two Europan-led world wars and the processes of decolonization. European conflicts became proxy wars and/or civil wars, often including foreign intervention, as they increasingly migrated away from 'Western' land. Thus they continued to engage in war-related activities overseas. Western nations gradually removed themselves from violence and war, shifting the symbolic epicenter of conflict southward in the minds of Europeans. The narratives around the collapse of Kiev due to the Russian invasion in contrast to e.g. Damascus or Baghdad, which are depicted in the European imagination as symbols of both violence and anarchy, continue to trouble the conscience.

6. Conclusion

Throughout this research we have seen that when looking from a decolonial perspective, three major media discourses on the topic of Ukrainian refugees were identified within British newspapers. Three major discourses were discussed within this thesis.

The most prevalent discourse that emerged from the dataset was one of personalisation. Who the "Ukrainian refugees" were was quite evident from the news reports. They were overwhelmingly not referred to as simply "refugees," a label determined by their situation. But through their background stories, you were shown to understand Ukrainian refugees as people with families, active members of society and with lives they can return to. By giving Ukrainian refugees the freedom to speak for themselves through long quotations, this discourse allows for personalized storytelling with a very actor-centered approach. In contrast to past studies on refugee media discourses, where refugees are frequently perceived as mute beings, even though they were at the center of the discussion.

The dataset's second most common discourse was a humanitarian one that emphasized and promoted its society's selfless assistance and individual contributions to a welcoming culture for Ukrainian refugees. This discourse called for a humanitarian approach in public discourse by expecting the reader to assist Ukrainian refugees because doing so should be the moral thing to do. Although the solidarity shown to Ukrainians is admirable and appropriate, it also exposes the existence of a double standard. It is interesting to notice that this threat-narrative is absent and a humanitarian discourse is promoted when refugees with a supposed "white" European identity are being discussed. The results of this study stand in contrast to other studies on the media discourse around refugees, which emphasized humanitarian concerns while portraying migrants as a "threat" to the economies, cultures, and security of host countries (Gruessing & Boomgaarden, 2017, Jacos et.al., 2016).

The last discourse that was prevalent, especially in the center-right publications that were part of this dataset, was the astonishment factor that a "crisis" like this was happening within Europe, to Europeans. These stories about how "shocking" it is that people who "seem so like us" are now facing a war and where many had to flee for their lives demonstrate how racism is

deeply ingrained in our European society, where we marginalize everything that is not "like us." They also expose how the media devalues conflicts in non-European locations.

Through this research, we have seen that, when viewed from a Decolonial perspective, media discourses on the subject of Ukrainian refugees that could be found in British newspapers were in stark contrast to previous studies. Past studies showed how the media sustained a Western conception of the refugee as a voice of the "other," one that is frequently described as a threat to our society in various ways and frequently portrayed as a nameless mass of people. The data presented discourses on personalisation, agency, the use of a humanitarian framing, and the surprise that a war was happening to "people who appear like us".

The portrayals of earlier migrants compared to Ukrainian refugees, who are largely seen as having this imagined white European identity, stand in stark contrast to earlier research, with narratives that play into these dichotomous colonial narratives. This leads to a comprehension of how the media supports the global racial hierarchy that colonialism and imperialism erected. Contrary to colonial discourses, which established racial hierarchy in the colonies, modern media discourse perpetuates colonial epistemology at home and outside of the colonies. It creates racialized populations on domestic territory.

This study is aware of several limitations. First off, the small sample size of the data set limits how broadly the study's conclusions may be applied. Additionally, the study is only able to generalize its findings of the United Kingdom and cannot be used to discuss a "Western" or "European" discourse. However, the findings of this study are reliable for addressing the research questions and attaining the study's goals. In addition, for future endeavors, it would be worthwhile to explore a multiple-level (combining both visual and textual news reports) with cross-country discourse analysis, which was not feasible within this thesis due to time constraints and accessibility. This would provide a more accurate picture of the European or Western media discourse on Ukrainian refugees from a decolonial perspective.

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Appendix I: Data collection

Table 1: Overview of the material collected

	Source dd/mm	Headline	words
T1	The Telegraph, 04/03	'One minute I'm preparing for Paris Fashion week, the next, I'm fleeing Ukraine as a war refugee'	1098
T2	The Telegraph, 26/02	UK 'most throw open its doors' to Ukraine refugees as thousands flee warzone	666
T3	The Telegraph 04/03	'A noble and correct thing to do': Telegraph readers on the Ukraine refugee crisis	1193
T4	The telegraph 01/03	Fleeing for their lives to Poland, Ukraine's refugees find safety and solace in an army of stranges	1069
T5	The Telegraph 08/03	There'll be riots if Britain does not fix shambolic Ukraine refugee visa system	1146
T6	The Telegraph 26/02	Vladimir Putin's monstrous invasion is an attack on civilization itself	1434
T7	Telegraph 10/03	Britain must heed the lessons of history and let in Ukrainian refugees 'Letters to the editor'	458
T8	Telegraph 10/03	British public will be asked to take Ukrainian refugees into their home	1378
T9	Telegraph	Prince Charles: Ukrainian refugees can solve the skills shortage in Britain	705
T10	Telegraph 10/03	'British schindler' guides 270 refugee orphans out of Ukraine to safety	854
T11	Telegraph 28/2	'One cop pulled a gun out': ukraine's black refugees recall 'racist' hostility as they tried to flee	769
T12	Telegraph 26/02	Women cross into safety of Poland as their men stay to face the enemy Dispatch refugee families at the	1198

		border say tearful goodbyes as sons, brothers and husbands remain behind to join in the defence of Ukraine	
DM1	Mail 02/03	One million refugees have fled across the borders of Ukraine since Russian forces invaded, last week, the UN reveals	1929 words
DM2	Mail 01/03	What a world to be born into: Heartbreaking images reveal how across Ukraine desperate refugee mothers are giving birth as they shelter from Russia's bombs while orphans huddle in an Basement just to stay alive, writes Richard pendlebury	1040
DM3	Mail 05/03	The long goodbye: Emotional father, 41, presses his hands against train window as he says farewell to five-year old daughter on train out of Kyiv as refugees fleeing Ukraine is set to hit 1.5 m by tomorrow	1653
DM4	Mail 27/02	MAIL ON SUNDAY COMMENT: Give till it hurts: How you can ease the pain of Ukraine' refugees	780
DM5	Mail 28/02	ALEX BRUMMER: Britain saved my dad from hell in Eastern Europe. Let's show todays a heart refugees in Ukraine that we still have	1279
DM6	Mail 28/02	African refugees fleeing Ukraine are facing 'shockingly racist' treatment with border guards blocking their attempts to cross the border into Poland, continent's leader claim	1050
DM7	Mail 07/03	Brave Ukrainian refugee ages 11 travels 600 miles on his own to Slovakia with just a telephone number written on his hand to reach safety	
DM8	Mail 07/03	Mothers' love knows no borders: women leave prams for Ukrainian refugees with babies at Polish railway station in heart-warming gesture	1876
DM9	Mail 01/03	Britain will give sanctuary to 100.000	477

		ukraine refugees	
DM10	Mail 08/03	Cornwall taxi driver and staffordshire pub boss join the kind-hearted brits traveling thousands of miles to Poland and Ukraine to make medicine, clothes, toys and nappies	1237
DM11	Mail 08/03	Why are we letting so few Ukrainians into UK... and how can this be improved_ We answer the big questions in refugees now	1126
DM12	Mail 28/02	Britain saved my dad from hell in Eastern Europe. Let's show todays a heart refugees in Ukraine that we still have	1279
S1	The Sun 07/22	Ukrainians are resilient..but having to flee has left people traumatized: ES on frontline and effort we Ukraine Irish heroes in living hell targets civilians	1045
S2	The Sun (25/02)	West has to stand up to the monster	498
S3	The Sun 04/03	The Sun says: It is heartbreaking to feel so powerless against nuclear-armed tyrant Putin	513
S4	The Sun 09/03	Helping hand: How to host Ukrainian refugees in UK	1039
S5	The Sun 04/03	Horros of war: Hearbreaking picture shows baby carried to safety from rubble of Russian blas as Putin Denies bombing of Ukraine	1255
S6	The Sun 03/03	I Cry, but I have to be strong: We Ukraine refugee hell as 875000 escape says Red Cross Volunteer Monica	1160
S7	The Sun 27/02	I'm safe mum we Ukraine worst refugee crisis since world war 2, fleeing kids' tearful reunion over the border 120.000 get out and another 5 million on the way	897
S8	The Sun 10/03	Mum's heartache I travelled more than 1500 miles from Ukraine with my daughter only to be turned away at	924 words

		the UK border	
S9	The Sun 05/03	Run for cover: Heartbreaking pics show Ukrainians hiding under destroyed bridge from Russian airstrikes as 1.5 million on run from Putin	577
S10	The Sun 09/03	Uk has to act	554
S11	The Sun 04/03	Horros of war: Hearbreaking picture shows baby carried to safety from rubble of Russian blas as Putin Denies bombing of Ukraine	1255
S12	The Sun 03/03	I Cry, but I have to be strong: We Ukraine refugee hell as 875000 escape says Red Cross Volunteer Monica	1160
G1	Guardian 28/02	The Guardian view on welcoming refugees from Ukraine: Britain must do more	575
G2	Guardian 01/03	'I couldn't leave my son': the Ukrainians going into the war zone	935
G3	Guardian 05/03	'Quite wrong': David Miliband singles out UK's visa policy on Ukrainian refugees	1011
G4	Guardian 09/03	Russia-Ukraine war: what we know on day 14 of the Russian invasion	949
G5	Guardian 08/03	There is no excuse for woeful UK response to Ukraine's refugee crisis	1221
G6	Guardian 05/03	As 1.3 million people flee, Ukraine's refugee crisis is only just the beginning	897
G7	Guardian 09/03	Anger and exhaustion as Ukrainians turned aways by UK in Calais	1173
G8	Guardian 02/03	Ukraine refugees given right to live in EU for three years	701
G9	Guardian 10/03	Ukraine has fastest-growing refugee crisis since second world war, says	1050

		UN	
G10	Guardian 24/02	Thousands of Ukrainians flee country after Russian invasion	916
G11	Guardian 10/03	Ukraine humanitarian crisis: what is the most effective way to help?	612
G12	Guardian 02/03	Ukraine refugees given right to live in EU for three years	701
M 1	Daily Mirror 26/02	Ukrainian land grab will shake Europe to core	499
M2	Daily Mirror 09/03	Let's do this together: Your community corner	1109
M3	Daily Mirror 08/03	Completely immoral: War in Ukraine: Escape routes outrage: bogus civilian passages lead refugees into Russia > Putin snubs ceasefire to shell fleeing families	835
M4	Daily Mirror 06/03	'A tragedy for a generation' as Ukrainians face 'Sophie's choice'	305
M4	Daily Mirror 10/03	10.000 Offer homes war in ukraine: Big-hearted welcome to those in need	895
M5	Daily Mirror 08/03	After all they have been through, it's unbelievable we're stranded in Calais: War in Ukraine: Plight of refugees barred from UK builder who rescued family rails at Brit bureaucracy	844
M6	Daily Mirror 05/03	Black couple's border ordeal	327
M7	Daily Mirror 28/02	Escape the bombs war in Ukraine: Sad farewell of fleeing kids: thousands of refugees, find a welcome in Poland	707
M8	Daily Mirror 07/03	Get a grip, war in Ukraine: Shame of Uk refugee respons: Patel 'doing little' to help those fleeing war: Claims people were turned back at Calais	866

M9	Daily Mirror 01/03	HITLER OF OUR TIME WAR IN UKRAINE : DICTATOR DASHES CEASEFIRE HOPES ?? More sanctions as bombing ramped up ?? UN hears Putin is 'despot in his bunjer'	761
M10	Daily Mirror 01/03	Safe..but where next? Y INNOCENTS OF PUTIN'S ATTACK WAR IN UKRAINE : TINY I Child refugees among many thousands fleeing Ukraine	732
M11	Daily Mirror 27/02	Will we see home again? WAR ON UKRAINE : THE E FEARFUL FAMILIES TORN APART Thousands of women and children flee as dads, sons, husbands fight	794
M12	Daily Mirror 02/03	Your help could be vital in saving the vulnerable millions	357

Appendix II: Checklist ethical and privacy aspects of research

ERASMUS UNIVERSITEIT ROTTERDAM

CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed before commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Jennifer A. Holland, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title: Master's Thesis, Master Sociology
Name, email of student: Latiffah Salima Baldeh, 625307lb@eur.nl
Name, email of supervisor: Bonnie French, french@essb.eur.nl
Start date and duration: April 4, 2022 through June 20, 2022

Is the research study conducted within DPAS   YES - NO

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organisation will the study be conducted? (e.g. internship organisation)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants?   YES - <mark>NO</mark>

   If 'NO': skip to part V

   If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research?   YES - NO
   Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act (WMO) must first be submitted to an accredited medical research ethics committee or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (CCMO).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations   YES - NO
   that will not involve identification of participants.

   If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary   YES - NO
   data that has been anonymized by someone else).

   If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what   YES - NO
   can participants expect during the study to be withheld from them?

2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written   YES - NO
   'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study?

3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation YES - NO
   at any time be withheld from participants?

4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants?   YES - NO
   Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to
   think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study
   is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they
   harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).

5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress   YES - NO
   or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants?

6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as
   defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions,
   religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic
   data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person,
   data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's
   sex life or sexual orientation)?   YES - NO

7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or   YES - NO
   other groups that cannot give consent?

8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study?   YES - NO

9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the   YES - NO
   confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured?

10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? YES - NO

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

_____
_____
_____
_____

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

_____
_____
_____
_____

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

_____

_____

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

_____

_____

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

_____

_____

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

The acquired data from this research was immediately stored at my home computer, that is only accessible by me and password protected. _____

_____

Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

I am responsible _____

_____

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

Once a week _____

_____

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

This research does not make use of personal data_____

_____

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: *Latiffah Salima Baldeh*   Name (EUR) supervisor: *Bonnie French*
Date: 07 August, 2022   Date: 07 August, 2022