Bridging for profit and non-profit:

An explorative study into corporate communication about forced migration

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ABSTRACT

To benefit from Corporate Social Responsibility, companies need to build awareness around their activities by communicating them to stakeholders. Therefore, the companies engage in discourse creation around the topics they interact with, one of them being forced migration. Especially in the wake of the Syrian emergency mediatized in 2015, and more recently the Ukrainian emergency that outbroke in 2022, many companies implemented CSR activities aimed at helping the forcibly displaced people and started to communicate about forced migration. Limited research has been conducted on the representations of forced migrants provided by technological companies. The communication of the rest of the private sector remains largely understudied. In this research, we address this academic gap by studying how companies represent forcibly displaced people and related emergencies in their online communication to external stakeholders. We do so by conducting a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of the organic social media content of five multinational companies from different sectors, namely Google, McKinsey & Company, Starbucks, Airbnb, and IKEA. The analysis includes Twitter and YouTube content, and the linked website entries. The study revealed heterogeneity of representations, having a mixed influence on shaping the private sector's discourses, that were categorized into three themes: more positive representations of the forcibly displaced people as specific, 'empowered' individuals'; more negative representations of forcibly displaced people as agency-lacking receivers of help dependent on the Northern benevolence; and dehumanizing representation of forced migration as a crisis. Some of these findings are contingent with the previous research on the private sector's and other relevant stakeholders' discourses around the topic. However, the study also brings important, new insights and extends the academic understanding of corporate communication about forced migration. Primarily analyzing strategies of representation, the study brings media genre and sector-specific insights, as well as pays attention to the motivation behind CSR, and the influence of all the above on displayed power relationships between the Global North and the Global South.

KEYWORDS: *forced migration, corporate communication, corporate social responsibility, corporate humanitarianism, multimodal critical discourse analysis*

Table of Contents

Abstract and keywords

1. Introduction 1

2. Theoretical Framework 5

2.1. Introducing and Situating Corporate Engagements in the Humanitarian Field . 5

2.2. The Importance of Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility 7

2.3. Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility through Owned Media 8

2.3.1. Self-serving vs. Society-serving Communication 8

2.3.2. Informing vs. Interacting Communication 10

2.4. Corporate Action for Forcibly Displaced People 11

2.5. Corporate Discourses about Forced Migration 14

2.5.1. Forced Migration as a Technological Challenge 15

2.5.2. Forcibly Displaced People as Entrepreneurs and Employees 16

2.5.3. Representations of Forcibly Displaced Women 18

2.6. Relevant Stakeholders' Discourses about Forcibly Displaced People 19

2.6.1. Discourses of News Media 19

2.6.2. Discourses of NGOs and Humanitarian Organizations 21

2.6.3. Discourses of Governments and Politicians 22

3. Research Design 24

3.1. Method 24

3.2. Sample and Sampling 25

3.3. Data Analysis and Operationalization 29

3.3.1. Author's Positionality 30

4. Results 32

4.1. Forcibly Displaced People as 'Empowered' Individuals 33

4.1.1. Forcibly Displaced People as Families and Friends 33

4.1.2. Forcibly Displaced People as Employees and Students 35

4.1.3. Forcibly Displaced People as Heroes and Fighters 39

4.2. Forcibly Displaced People as Receivers of Help 41

4.2.1. Forcibly Displaced People as Victims 41

4.2.2. Forcibly Displaced People as Objects of CSR 45

4.2.3. Distinct Representations of Forcibly Displaced Ukrainians 47

4.3. Forced Migration as a Crisis 50

5. Conclusion 55

References 59

Appendix A: List of analyzed data 70

Appendix B: Code lists 72

1. Introduction

The current business environment increasingly demands corporations to integrate social issues into their operations and contribute to the improvement of social well-being (Du et al., 2010). Businesses have a wide selection of actions they can take for social improvement, including philanthropy, volunteer projects, and workforce integration. These activities of 'doing good' fall under an umbrella term of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), defined as "international private business (self) regulation, focused on the reduction and mitigation of industrial harms and provision of public goods" (Sheehy, 2015, p. 643). Nowadays, CSR is almost indispensable to the global business agenda, due to the rising socio-environmental awareness of the public and growing stakeholder demands regarding environmental and social action. This is especially prevalent among younger generations. Deloitte (2022) Global Millennial and Gen Z survey has shown that social and environmental issues are a top concern of these generations and that both groups increasingly push for change by consciously choosing companies that align with their values to buy from and to work for. For these and other reasons, CSR carries recognized importance for business development and success (Du et al., 2010), and has proven to be mutually beneficial, positively affecting the social environment and corporate profits. Research (Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021; Du et al., 2010) has shown that allocating resources in a way that supports social causes, can enhance a business's image and reputation among stakeholders and the broader market.

One of the societal issues that the companies engage with is forced migration (Aldairany et al., 2023; Bergman Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020; Henriksen & Richey, 2022; Szkudlarek et al., 2022; Wang & Chaudhri, 2019). Forced migration refers to an "involuntary movement [of people] … both across international borders and inside a single county" (UNHCR, 2016) caused by "persecution, conflict, generalized violence or human rights violations" (UNHCR, 2014). This topic re-gained international attention after the Ukrainian emergency in 2022.[1] The number of forcibly displaced people worldwide has risen from 68.5 million in 2017 to 103 million in mid-2022, reaching one of the highest levels historically (UNHCR, 2022a). The Ukrainian refugees form the second largest refugee population and remain a group in high need (UNHCR, 2023). However, other less mediatized groups remain. For example, various Middle Eastern refugee populations are still in need of and seek help

[1] The term 'forced migration' lacks a universally acknowledged definition, and it is not a legal term, which makes it open to interpretation and nuance. The provided definition relies on fragmentary definitions by UNHCR.

and asylum. This is a result of the prolonged crises that have been taking place in the region, but which lack international spotlight from global new media (USA for UNHCR, 2022a, 2022b). Similarly, many people flee within and from Sub-Saharan African countries. However, these crises are often neglected by international news media, politics, and donors (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023). These crises involve many internally displaced people, who form the most numerous group among forcibly displaced people worldwide. They tend to be almost fully neglected in the public discourses of the Northern world (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2023). The growing number of people who flee, the emergence of new contexts, and ongoing conflicts demonstrate that the issue is current and pressing, and partially explain growing corporate engagement (Martinez, 2018).

There are two key aspects of any action for social improvement from the perspective of businesses - to take action, and to communicate this action in a way that allows achieving benefits. The general theory on implementation of CSR acknowledges the substantial role of communication. As stated by Du and colleagues (2010) “the business returns to CSR are contingent on stakeholders’ awareness of a company’s CSR activities” (p. 9). Therefore, engaged companies often extensively communicate their CSR actions to stakeholders, producing and sharing content through a variety of channels including websites and social media (Du et al., 2010). Therefore, companies become active players in public debates and influence societal attitudes as well as the narratives about issues within society. Especially, when incorporating social media that have proven to influence public discourses (Balasubramanian et al., 2021; Kunduru, 2018; Ye et al., 2017), and that will be the focus of this paper. Therefore, depending on the representations the companies provide, whether they endorse or contest prevailing narratives, the influences of corporate communication on public discourse might vary.

Likewise, the role of corporate engagement in the improvement of the well-being of forcibly displaced people is not limited to CSR actions, because corporate communication impacts the discourses about these groups more broadly. This has especially been the case between 2015, when the conflict in Syria, and the corresponding large-scale displacement of the Syrian population became mediatized, and 2022, when Russia’s invasion on Ukraine initiated a large-scale war, forcing many Ukrainians to flee. Companies have been more active in both taking action and communicating about their impact in the wake of these forced migrations (e.g., Aldairany et al., 2023; Burke et al., 2022; Madianou, 2019; Nwaoboli et al., 2022). Therefore, the private sector’s role in shaping discourses around forcibly displaced people might have potentially increased.

Despite that, academia has mostly focused on discourses on refugee-related issues in the context of news media (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017; Zaborowski & Georgiou, 2018; Zawadzka-Paluektau, 2023), humanitarian organizations (Olivius, 2016; Ongenaert, 2019; Ongenaert & Joye, 2019; Rajaram, 2002) and, to some extent, political actors (Johnson, 2011; Pannia, 2021). Some research (Henriksen & Richey, 2022; Menashy & Zakharia, 2020) has been conducted about tech companies and the role the technological industry's innovations play in combatting issues related to forced migration. Yet the private sector's involvement in shaping discourses about forced migration remains understudied, with other corporate industries' involvement being almost completely left out of the academic debate (Bergman Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020).

This research aims at providing a broader understanding of the issue and bridging the academic gap on the private sector's communication about forcibly displaced people. Therefore, this study will analyze how companies represent forcibly displaced people and related emergencies in their online communication to external stakeholders. We will focus on owned online media channels, that is, those where the content is created and controlled by the organizations themselves (i.e., organic content). The paper will analyze organic social media content for twofold reasons. Firstly, the research on CSR communication has proven these channels to be favored and the most used in the private sector (Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021; Cortado & Chalmeta, 2016). Secondly, they are key for the private sector to reach broad audiences in today's mediatized society (Perdue, 2010). Specifically, we will examine discourses of multinational companies from the Global North from the technological, professional service, hospitality, food and beverage, and retail sectors (i.e., Google, McKinsey & Company, Airbnb, Starbucks, and IKEA).[2] We will conduct a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) of the companies' YouTube videos (N=32) and Twitter posts (N=65), as well as additional, organic content linked in the Twitter posts, that is press releases, stories, and blog posts (N=19). The focus will be laid on the content published between 2015 and 2022, by representative companies from the given sectors, belonging to the Tent partnership for refugees – a non-profit organization that collaborates with businesses

[2] Throughout this paper we will rely on a division of Global North vs. Global South, describing global differences with an emphasis on geopolitical power relations (Dados & Connell, 2012). According to Kloß (2017), this terminology, especially the term Global South, "has great potential in consolidating and empowering the various social actors that consider themselves to be in subaltern(ized) positionalities of global networks [of power]" (p. 8). While we acknowledge the limitations and challenges embedded in this terminology, we use the terms due to its potential of restructuring unequal power relations (Kloß, 2017). Since exposing and denaturalizing oppressive power structures lies at the core of Critical Discourse Analyses (Machin & Mayr, 2012), we consider this terminology suitable for this research.

worldwide to enhance the well-being and economic prospects of refugees globally (Tent Partnership for Refugees, n.d.-a).

To contextualize and theorize the subject, we will first introduce and situate corporate discourses about forced migration. Then, we will discuss the importance and implications of communicating CSR, as well as the role online, owned media channels play in communicating it. We will continue by elaborating on the interactions between private and humanitarian sectors, including corporate-humanitarian partnerships with a specific focus on forced migration. Next, we will focus on discourses about forcibly displaced people and forced migration created by and finally on discourses of different institutions, including news media, governments, and non-governmental organizations.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Introducing and Situating Corporate Engagements in the Humanitarian Field

By engaging in social actions, companies get into interaction with other actors involved in, influencing and/or communicating about humanitarian aid (e.g., NGOs, governments and politicians, and news media), as will be exemplified hereafter. This means, that corporate action within the humanitarian field is often grounded in a cross-institutional context, and not merely the benefits and self-interest of companies to implement CSR (Pedersen & Pedersen, 2013). To give an example, an increasing number of NGOs helping forcibly displaced people turn towards corporations for financial, expertise, or resource contribution (Johnson, 2011; Noh, 2017). This is – to an extent – caused by the tightening of policies and implementation of more restrictive legislations regarding immigration and asylum undertaken by many EU and non-EU states (Johnson, 2011; Pannia, 2021). Consequently, NGOs face a growing hesitancy of the states towards cooperation, and limited access to governmental funding, which, considering their reliance on external financial support, makes them move towards partnerships with the private sector (Johnson, 2011).

Another external factor that has had a significant, global impact on corporate engagement in social action was the introduction of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Wang & Chaudhri, 2019). One of the many imperatives of SDGs is to recognize and improve the lives of the most vulnerable populations, to which forcibly displaced people belong (UNHCR, n.d.). Resultantly, many governments have enacted legislation and policies that encourage or require companies to align their business practices with the SDGs. For example, in the European Union, the Non-Financial Reporting Directive (The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2014) requires large companies to disclose information on their environmental, social, and governance policies and how they align with the SDGs. [3] Hence, aside from the social pressure put on companies to implement CSR, in many cases the private sector is also legally obliged to do so.

Moreover, it must be noted that society's approach towards businesses has drastically changed over the past century, along with the transformation of the business environment more generally (Argenti, 2013). The introduction of CSR and the changing global economic

[3] The Non-Financial Reporting Directive has been recently amended with the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (The European Parliment and the Council of the European Union, 2022)

structure played an important role in the transformation. This (ongoing) transformation visualizes, for example, through the shifts in the global ranking of the world's richest entities, over the past 20 years. According to the report released by the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development in 2002, 29 out of 100 world's top economies were multinational companies, rather than governments (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2002); until 2018 that number has risen to 69 (Global Justice Now, 2018). With corporations gaining wealth (and power), it is unsurprising that the social expectations towards companies are growing, and that individuals pay more attention to corporate actions (Argenti, 2013). Especially, that the accumulation of wealth further exacerbates social inequalities, which partly explains the heightened social interest in corporate activities (Burns, 2019) Therefore, in contemporary settings, it is expected from corporations to acknowledge the social and economic consequences of their actions (Isenmann, 2006), as well as recognize their role as social actors and provide leadership in tackling societal issues (Argenti, 2013; Edelman, 2022).

The above-described examples exhibit the diversity of influences that shape the field of humanitarianism, which has implications for communication practices. The entanglement of multiple stakeholders can potentially make them influence each other's narratives. Especially that corporate communication is influenced by twofold motives behind corporate humanitarianism. Specifically, corporate humanitarianism bridges theoretically opposing worlds of profit-driven private sector, and non-profit humanitarianism, which from the social perspective situates it on the edge of capitalism and humanitarianism (Henriksen & Richey, 2022; Richey et al., 2021). As a result, companies must be careful in their CSR communication strategies to successfully balance self and social interests behind their engagement, if they want to gain benefits (Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021; Du et al., 2010). Moreover, also when communicating about forced migration specifically, companies become entangled in a wider, multi-institutional network, where all stakeholders jointly shape the public discourse. As will be later discussed, there are similarities in the forced migration discourses of the private sector and other relevant stakeholders. Hence, it is not only insufficient, but also impossible to research corporate discourses about forced migration without acknowledging the broader field of CSR communication, and other actors active in the humanitarian field. Therefore, we will firstly elaborate on CSR communication and its importance.

2.2. The Importance of Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility

As rightly pointed out by Ajayi and Mmutle (2021) "CSR can only influence stakeholders' positive assessment when they are aware of the organizations' social responsibility activities in a first place" (p. 2). Therefore, the primary importance of incorporating CSR communication lies in the benefits of keeping stakeholders informed (Du et al., 2010). One of them is to display the company's alignment with stakeholders' demands and values, which has proven to bring a myriad of benefits to companies, including an improvement of a company's economic performance in the long term (Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021; Argenti, 2013; Du et al., 2010; Etter, 2013). For example, Du and colleagues (2010) pointed out that (communicating) CSR can enhance stakeholder attitudes and brand image; motivate supportive behaviors during crisis, and stimulate turnover from competitors, towards the communicating brand. Furthermore, it can help to acquire stakeholder loyalty and advocacy, which can lead to ambassadorship, positive WOM, and therefore free advertising. As a result, the brand might gain new customers, while the present ones might become more willing to spend with the brand, or even become investors (Du et al., 2007; Sen et al., 2006), which touches upon the aspects of economic profitability.

Another benefit of increasing stakeholder awareness of CSR activities is market differentiation. It is relevant due to the rapid growth of the private sector and the subsequent increase in competition. Hence, the ability to differentiate from competitors and acquire (loyal) stakeholders is often key to success (Argenti, 2013). Communicating CSR can help to achieve these objectives. According to the Edelman Trust Barometer 2022, 58% of the global online population will buy or advocate brands; 60% will choose a place to work; and 80% will invest based on their beliefs and values (Edelman, 2022). These findings are consistent with Argenti's (2013) claim that contemporary businesses need to position themselves within a wider social context to win customers', employees', and investors' appeal. Considering a general demand for more socially focused corporate actions (Edelman, 2022), effective communication can distinguish a company from its competitors, further explaining the relevance of communicating CSR.

Yet, executing effective CSR communication comes with challenges, such as contrasting expectations from different stakeholder groups, or the lack of cohesive public opinion regarding the issue (Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021). The latter can be especially challenging and problematic in the context of forced migration (infra). Forced migration triggers varying responses throughout media and society, and therefore related CSR cannot guarantee entirely

positive effects. Nonetheless, the conflicting social approaches further signify the importance of effective CSR communication, and especially the significance of the provided representations for social change. Therefore, let us now discuss how the private sector communicates about CSR through owned media channels.

2.3. Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility through Owned Media

Three types of media categories can be activated by organizations within communication: paid (advertising, e.g., SEO), earned (unpaid, not self-generated media giving publicity and exposure, e.g., social media buzz), and owned (online, unique property controlled by a brand, e.g., social media profiles) media. The research has shown that from these media types, companies utilize owned media for CSR communication the most often. The study by Ajayi and Mmutle (2021) identified press releases and corporate websites as the most frequently used channels, pointing to the fact that corporations tend to choose media with high messaging control. Nevertheless, social media has become a fundamental tool in corporate communication more generally (Camilleri, 2021), despite lower messaging control due to their interactive, dialogic nature. In recent years, following the popularization of social media, they have also become increasingly used for CSR information distribution specifically, due to their high reach and proven potential for a positive influence on brand image, reputation, and stakeholder relationships (Balasubramanian et al., 2021; Cortado & Chalmeta, 2016).

Scholars have distinguished two ways of categorizing CSR communication strategies through owned media channels, depending on the motive and the purpose behind the communication. Namely, society-serving and self-serving communication, and informative versus interactive communication (Du et al., 2010; Henriksen & Richey, 2022) This section will introduce these two categories and outline the motivations and consequences of implementing them.

2.3.1. Self-serving vs. Society-serving Communication

The two motives of self and societal interest behind CSR communication derive from the contradictory nature of corporate and humanitarian sectors that CSR must bridge. Historically and politically, these two worlds stand in opposition (Henriksen & Richey, 2022). The former is situated within a capitalistic logic, therefore mainly driven by extrinsic

motives, such as economic profitability or legal obligations (Du et al., 2010; Henriksen & Richey, 2022). The latter, relying on the principle of improving human lives and alleviating suffering is primarily guided by intrinsic motives of altruism and concern (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.; Du et al., 2010; Henriksen & Richey, 2022). Lately, with increasing corporate engagement in social issues, the differences between the sectors increasingly blur, making non-profit and for-profit realms hardly distinguishable (Du et al., 2010; Henriksen & Richey, 2022; Richey et al., 2021). Specifically, the CSR actions (e.g., workforce integration, tech philanthropy, infra) are examples of profit-driven humanitarianism, by being beneficial for both receivers and providers of help. These technically oppose the logic of humanitarianism which is – at least in theory - driven by altruism (Henriksen & Richey, 2022), or as stated by Carbonnier (2015), "requires embracing altruism and refraining from acting on self-interest alone" (p.198). This contradiction has implications and poses challenges to communication strategies (Du et al., 2010), as will be explained further in this section.

The key differences between corporate and humanitarian sectors as described above largely align with the division between self- and society-serving communication. Likewise, self-serving communication aims primarily at benefitting the company, therefore displaying extrinsic motivation, while society-serving communication focuses on social aspects, exhibiting intrinsic motivation, and leading to more positive stakeholder attitudes (Du et al., 2010; Y. Kim, 2014).[4] Nonetheless, most companies communicate CSR to benefit from it (Du et al., 2010). Communicating CSR has proven to bring benefits, which, even when not raising financial profits per se, might improve the company's economic performance in the long term (supra). Due to these financial reasons, CSR action often raises skepticism of stakeholders who undermine the credibility of social actions of the companies (Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021). The stakeholders question whether the social or environmental actions are to any extent motivated by a genuine concern, or solely by the premise of raising business profitability (Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021).

How the actions are perceived often depends on how they are communicated, that is whether the motive behind communication is society- or self-serving (Ajayi and Mmutle,

[4] It is important to acknowledge that NGOs also implement self-serving communication for branding, reputation, market differentiation, fundraising, and more (Macedo et al., 2021; Mwaipopo, 2002; Paço et al., 2014). However, the ultimate benefits that such communication aims to bring are primarily society-serving (Paço et al., 2014). For instance, better branding might lead to higher recognition among donors, potentially influencing their choice of an organization while attempting to help (Paço et al., 2014). Hence, the organization might raise more funds for a particular cause. Opposingly, the private sector primarily aims to benefit itself.

2021). Interestingly, some research (Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021; Du et al., 2010; Y. Kim, 2014) has shown that despite concerns provoked by self-serving communication, strategically combining both motives is perceived by stakeholders as the most trustworthy. The stakeholders are often aware of extrinsic motives, which causes suspicion when CSR appears to serve society only. Therefore, even though the motives seem exclusive, they most often go together and the ability to balance them in communication is of high significance when aiming at the positive perception of communicated messages (Du et al., 2010).

However, as both strategies seek to achieve different outcomes, they can be expected to deliver different representations. The self-serving strategy often prioritizes the company and its engagement over social issues, by primarily aiming to promote the company (Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021; Du et al., 2010). Consequently, implementing the strategy might result in trivializing social problems, being of secondary importance in such cases. Opposingly, society-serving communication usually foregrounds societal issues, aiming to contribute to social change, aside from gaining profits (Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021). Yet such communication requires in-depth knowledge of the issues to be effective (Du et al., 2010). However, as in most cases, the issues are not the main domain of the communicating companies, this might potentially trouble the representations provided.

2.3.2. Informing vs. Interacting Communication

The division between informing and interacting communication exceeds the field of CSR communication and applies to strategies of media communication in general. In sum, informing communication characterizes by a linear, one-way structure, and is typical for traditional media channels, whereas interacting communication relies on a two-way, dialogic structure as present in new media including social media. Therefore, informing communication enables high messaging control, while interacting communication allows for feedback and conversation between the sides (Morsing, 2006). The two strategies have been intensively studied in the field of CSR communication specifically (e.g., Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021; Kim, 2019; Morsing, 2006), following the recognition in the corporate sector, that creating sensitivity toward stakeholders' values and expectations can benefit businesses and is important for development. Many researchers (Eberle et al., 2013; Morsing & Schultz, 2006; Parsons, 2011) have advocated switching towards interacting communication to maximize the benefits of implementing CSR. Among others, Cortado and Chalmeta (2016) argue that two-way communication improves credibility and messaging impact, while the

research by Gupta and colleagues (2021) has shown it enhances purchase intention and customer loyalty. On top of this, considering a growing share of social media in CSR communication (Camilleri, 2021), a move towards a more interacting strategy seems to be a logical progression.

However, the research on the factual corporate usage of communication strategies opposes academic recommendations. Even though companies increasingly utilize social media, Ajayi & Mmutle (2021) discovered that companies tend to restrict the dialogic affordances of these media by posting content that discourages stakeholders from engaging in the conversation. Instead, they implement an informing strategy as used in traditional media (Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021). Enforcing one-way communication on social media collides with social media's interactive, dialogic nature, and makes the choice of such channels questionable. To the best of our knowledge, no research on the motives behind placing the focus on an informing instead of an interacting strategy has been conducted. Nevertheless, the researchers have identified a gap between theory and practice, with a presumed motive behind implementing the informing strategy being a fear of criticism that might appear as a consequence of subjecting CSR activities to public discourse (Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021; Gomez-Vasquez & Chalmeta, 2013).

The choice to communicate CSR by mainly using the informing strategy can potentially influence discourse creation. By choosing an informing communication strategy that does not encourage external engagement, the companies may be hoping to maintain a higher messaging control, when compared to interacting communication. Considering that previous research indicated that the companies struggle to renounce their communication control and assisting it power (Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021; Capriotti, 2017), this highlights the importance of analyzing company-generated content, when looking to disclose corporate discourses. However, before looking into the discourses, let us first elaborate on actions that the private sector implements to help the forcibly displaced people.

2.4. Corporate Action for Forcibly Displaced People

As mentioned, companies need to communicate about their CSR activities for reasons of profitability, reputation, and stakeholder relationships (supra). In this section, we discuss their main ways of engaging in the humanitarian industry. According to SociSDG – a strategic partnership project aiming at enhancing the awareness and knowledge of companies regarding the measurement and integration of social SDGs into their business strategies, there

are three main ways through which companies should engage in tackling humanitarian emergencies related to forced migration. Namely, through donations to humanitarian organizations, direct support in the form of mentorship or employment, and changing the narratives and negative perceptions of forcibly displaced people in Northern societies (Kartallozi, 2019). This aligns with common CSR activities of companies, which in the context of forced migration most often take shape of workforce integration, training and, philanthropy in the form of financial and/or product donations (Bergman Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020; Liket & Simaens, 2015; Szkudlarek et al., 2022). Furthermore, recent studies (e.g., Henriksen & Richey, 2022; Madianou, 2019) have also recognized the existence of a separate branch of philanthropy, namely tech philanthropy, which refers to donations of technological products, services, resources and expertise. Unlike other forms of engagement, which apply to most industries, tech philanthropy is a specific form of societal engagement of the technological industry (infra). Since the role of tech philanthropy in the humanitarian sphere constantly rises (Rejali & Heiniger, 2020), it deserves attention as a separate form of corporate action.

Among these forms, financial and product donations to humanitarian organizations remain the most common (Liket & Simaens, 2015). They allow for engagement without necessarily implementing CSR into the business model or easily raising impact aside from providing help otherwise, therefore being a relatively easy strategy for implementing CSR (Liket & Simaens, 2015). Philanthropy is often implemented through collaborations with NGOs, which after the donation take over the responsibility for placing donated products and funds where they are needed (Ditlev-Simonsen, 2017). In such cases, companies often rely on humanitarian organizations, and can potentially remain distant from the issues they engage with. Interestingly, in research, implementing CSR through corporate philanthropy is increasingly criticized, and the practice is commonly seen as obsolete and inefficient. Nonetheless, the meta-analysis conducted by Liket and Simaens (2015) displayed the lack of agreement among scholars, a multiplicity of contradictory research findings, and a discrepancy between theory and practice. In short, the study has shown that while most scholars see corporate philanthropy as old-fashioned, empirical research has proven that companies practice it extensively. Importantly for discourse creation, the motives behind implementing philanthropy also appear twofold, with some studies advocating an altruistic approach, and others self-interest (Liket & Simaens, 2015). This indicates that communication might also be differently approached.

Yet, the form of engagement that received the most attention in the studies on forced migration is tech philanthropy and the engagement of tech companies more broadly. Unsurprisingly the omnipresence of technology in the contemporary world, exposes itself also in the humanitarian sphere. Regarding forced migration, it has been noted that the role of technology constantly rises in processing, aiding, and settling refugees (Burke et al., 2022), which also justifies heightened scholarly interest. Companies such as Google or Amazon frequently lead the way toward social impact, proposing inventive solutions (Henriksen & Richey, 2022). The development of such tools forms the basis of tech philanthropy, where tech companies' products and expertise are utilized in a seemingly socially meaningful way (Henriksen & Richey, 2022). One example is humanitarian online assistance, which has been aided by digital tools, and enables to provide information quicker and more efficiently to the ones in need (Burke et al., 2022). Providing this kind of support, tech companies strengthen their market position and raise competitiveness, by presenting the compliance of their business with CSR activities. Simultaneously, investing time and resources in developing solutions such as online assistance platforms, they actively work towards the enhancement of the welfare of forcibly displaced people, in contrast to companies whose engagement is limited to financial donations. However, the practices of tech philanthropy have also raised concerns regarding the motivation behind engagement, which include shifting the public focus away from the accumulation of wealth, or controversial data practices of tech companies (Henriksen & Richey, 2022; Madianou, 2019).

Lastly, among CSR activities for forcibly displaced people, workforce integration has been distinguished as one of the most urgent challenges (Szkudlarek et al., 2022). The inability to find a job is one of the main problems disrupting refugees' adaptation process, essential for a positive host country experience (Szkudlarek et al., 2021). Moreover, research (Burke et al., 2022) revealed that active engagement in society helps to overcome the negative attitudes of host societies towards refugees. In these circumstances, companies appear powerful, having the ability to shape the adjustment process, by providing job opportunities, and therefore actively introducing refugees as members of society (Ager & Strang, 2008; Szkudlarek et al., 2021). Keeping in mind these types of CSR actions for forcibly displaced people, we will now proceed by elaborating on corporate discourses that emerge as a result of incorporating and communicating these actions.

2.5. Corporate Discourses about Forced Migration

Already by implementing CSR, companies become active players in discourse creation. As highlighted by Bergman Rosamond and Gregoratti (2020), undertaking action for social improvement requires first defining the problem at stake to be able to propose a solution. Problem-solving requires interpreting the social issue, which likewise any interpretation is context specific and grounded in assumptions (Bacchi, 1999; Bergman Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020). Therefore, the representations are inherent to proposed solutions, as how the issue is seen is shaped by how it is proposed to be solved. The authors pose three questions, that can lead to denaturalizing how problem-solving constructs 'the reality'. What is the problem represented to be? What are the assumptions underlying the problem's representation? What aspects of the issues are left out in the problematization? The authors conclude that the provided solutions often fail to recognize the intricacy of the problem, which can oversimplify and problematize representations.

Moreover, engaging in action implies certain relationships of power, which are key in discourse creation. As stated by Bergman Rosamond & Gregoratti (2020), "corporate (…) humanitarians are located within immense privilege and power, as well as being immersed in the colonial, gendered and capitalistic logics of humanitarianism" (p. 16). The power imbalance is implied in the relationship between corporations, and their beneficiaries, as well as in the whole humanitarian sector, where the well-being of the disadvantaged partially depends on the (usually Northern-originated) organizations. Simultaneously, these power relations underlie linguistic and visual representations and shape discourses (Machin & Mayr, 2012). While not much research has been made to specify how power relations are reflected in corporate communication about forcibly displaced people, the existing one has already revealed power disproportions (infra). Moreover, the power imbalances between these groups exhibited in the social order and embedded in the logic of CSR (Bergman Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020; Drebes, 2016), enable to speculate they will further translate to the corporate communication and discourses.

In the upcoming sections, we provide an overview of three main ways of representing forced migration in corporate communication distinguished until now. Specifically, forced migration as a technological challenge in the context of tech philanthropy (Haydon et al., 2021; Henriksen & Richey, 2022), forcibly displaced people as entrepreneurs (Haydon et al., 2021; Szkudlarek et al., 2022), and distinct representations of forcibly displaced women (Bergman Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020). Including the last type of representation, we

respond to the call for the acknowledgment of gendered representations (infra), which in the context of corporate discourses have received even less attention. We look into the representations implicit in how the companies define the problems that they aim to overcome, the power structures that the proposed solutions reveal, and the power structured embedded in the relationships between help providers and beneficiaries. In some cases, due to the lack of more specific research, the overview refers to wider discourses of corporate humanitarianism, or philanthrocapitalism, which apply to forced migration. Importantly, all representations discussed in this section concern forcibly displaced people from the Global South. To the best of our knowledge, the research on corporate discourses around forcibly displaced people from Northern countries (World Population Review, 2023) has not yet been conducted.

2.5.1. Forced Migration as a Technological Challenge

The existing research displays mixed responses to the representations provided by companies that implement tech philanthropy. In line with the argumentation of Bergman Rosamond & Gregoratti (2020), technological tools developed to help forcibly displaced people appear as inherently containing representations of forced migration. Henriksen and Richey (2022) pointed out the tendency of tech companies to perceive (and shape the perception of) humanitarian emergencies as market deficiencies and chances for development. Similarly, a broader, meta-analytical study on philantrocapitalist discourses conducted by Haydon and colleagues (2021) disclosed that development challenges are often represented as scientific problems. Some of the analyzed articles revealed potential advantages of such representations for the improvement of social welfare. Specifically, social issues represented this way propel the interest in new technologies and motivate investments in further development. Consequently, the private sector is inclined towards offering more cutting-edge solutions, which other institutions such as governments and humanitarian organizations cannot provide (Haydon et al., 2021).

Nonetheless, such representations can also be problematic. For example, they have been criticized by Henriksen and Richey (2022) for shaping dehumanizing narratives. Specifically, the authors identify the problem in how such representations shape the understanding of human suffering as a technological challenge in need of solving. Within such a perspective, social issues are reduced to business opportunities and strategies for gaining wealth. Notably, some technological companies (e.g., Microsoft, Apple, Samsung Electronics, Amazon, Meta, Alphabet) are amongst the world's richest entities (Global

Justice Now, 2018), which comes with power and affects discourses. By highlighting the humanitarian and public engagements of such companies, the focus is shifted away from material disproportions between the world's richest and poorest, and the drawbacks of consolidating wealth and power in the hands of a very limited number of companies (Burns, 2019; Henriksen & Richey, 2022). Paradoxically, the consequences include the reinforcement of social inequalities, which humanitarianism should seek to overcome (Burns, 2019). Simultaneously, as pointed out by Burns (2019), communicating about newly developed technological solutions to social issues enables these companies to market themselves, which ultimately (is meant to) lead to higher revenue. This deepens disproportions and reinforces the existing social order. As the companies seek to market their solutions in the first place, communication can be expected to background the social aspect, similarly to self-serving communication strategy. Hence, such approaches can potentially impact discourses, due to how they display power relations through the communicational choices of text producers and the prioritization of what is represented (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

Moreover, as businesses seek standardizable solutions, they often fail to consider the unique contexts of the issues (Ignatova, 2017). Standardization-focused approach might create depersonalized representations, as the groups in need become masses that can be addressed in a standardized manner, neglecting differing individual needs (Ball & Olmedo, 2011). As a consequence, forced displacement and social issues more broadly become artificially separated from their social foundations and contexts (Ball & Olmedo, 2011; Ignatova, 2017). Instead, they are situated within a technological environment, where they are secondary. Such narratives disrupt the balance between self and social motivations expected in corporate humanitarianism and CSR, and they can hardly carry emancipatory value (Bergman Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020).

2.5.2. Forcibly Displaced People as Entrepreneurs and Employees

Haydon and colleagues (2021) distinguished another representational strategy, within which beneficiaries (e.g., forcibly displaced people) are presented as productive entrepreneurs. It derives from the above-described, business-focused approach, and presents beneficiaries as agents within a marketplace, incorporating them in the business environment and the host society. Such representations oppose traditional humanitarian discourses, where groups in need are portrayed as passive victims and beggars (infra). Moreover, they have the potential to positively influence Northern discourses, showing that forcibly displaced

immigrants can economically contribute to society, instead of reaping social benefits only (Haydon et al., 2021). Introducing such representations matters, as the general social perception of immigrant workers (e.g., expatriates) is significantly more positive than that of refugees, asylum-seekers, or other categories of forcibly displaced incomers (Szkudlarek et al., 2021). The expatriates are usually welcomed, as the discourses portray them as carriers of high social status, skillful professionals, and productive workers contributing to the country's economy. Creating points of similarity in representations of these groups, could therefore improve the social perception of forcibly displaced people (Szkudlarek et al., 2022). However, according to Kohl-Arenas (2017), such representations can pose a threat of over-individualization. While they might benefit individuals among the forcibly displaced who possess entrepreneurial skills, they simultaneously exclude others who lack these skills, and therefore appear unproductive. Furthermore, the consequences can extend beyond that and create an internal hierarchy of forcibly displaced people, where some are more eligible to receive help or to be accepted in society than others, whose image might in turn further deteriorate (Doolan et al., 2018). Therefore, the representations of forcibly displaced people as entrepreneurs carry twofold outcomes.

A similar correlation appears in discourses related to workforce integration, where the forcibly displaced people are also often hierarchized (Tilbury & Colic-Peisker, 2007). Although, in this case, less skillful individuals are prioritized over individuals with higher qualifications and have higher chances of finding employment (Cheng et al., 2021). Szkudlarek and colleagues (2021) refer to this common issue as the 'qualifications paradox'. Many receiving countries prioritize those whom they consider the most vulnerable, while not considering the alignment of incomers' skills and experience with the demands or shortages of the job market (Betts et al., 2016). In consequence, both low- and high-skilled individuals are likely to find employment in same-level positions, which for people with higher qualifications usually means a less satisfying job disrupting their adjustment process (Cheng et al., 2021; Tilbury & Colic-Peisker, 2007). Moreover, it can be suggested that since both groups are employed in lower, subordinate positions, the paradox maintains the hierarchy between the population of the receiving country and the immigrants. While this is not shaped by the corporate discourse per se, the employment structure that the paradox contributes to influences the social discourse, reinforcing the perception of forcibly displaced as unequal towards the locals.

2.5.3. Representations of Forcibly Displaced Women

Gender is an enormously important constituent of discourses and relationships of power. As argued by feminist studies, women from minority populations are usually subordinate to layering power relationships, where their social position is not only defined by nationality , religion, etc. but also by the role and expectations assigned to them as women (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Hence, even within minority groups, women are subject to separate discourses and represented differently, also within the context of the private sector and forced displacement.

The existence of gendered discourses and issues in these contexts has been acknowledged not only in academia, but also the corporate sector. For example, Bergman Rosamond and Gregoratti (2020) analyzed the communication endeavors of an NGO-corporate partnership aimed at helping refugee women specifically. This shows the recognition of the issue within both institutions. Opposing popular news media or humanitarian discourses (Plambech et al., 2021, infra), the study found refugee women to be represented as carrying entrepreneurial potential instead of being victimized or portrayed as primarily mothers. Nevertheless, the representations appeared less considerate of gender-specific struggles than the project idea. Within the same study, the authors argued that the partnership's communication represented a refugee woman as "some*body* in need of saving through the market, coupled with assumptions about her presumably latent and endless entrepreneurial skills and tireless energy to work in and beyond her household" (p. 21). In such context, the insertion into a job market becomes a universal remedy for all kinds of problems faced by refugee women, through how it helps them to achieve independence. The numerous problems are therefore simplified to become addressable through the provided solution. This corresponds with a more general approach of businesses addressing social issues by designing standardizable solutions, hence raising similar issues (supra). Furthermore, the apparent independence in fact subordinates women to the goodwill and compassion of Northern consumers. Hence, as concluded by Bergman Rosamond and Gregoratti (2020), the representations deriving from the proposed solutions, uphold Northern gender norms and privilege, instead of being truly empowering. To broaden the perspective on discourses about forced migration, we will now discuss the discourses of other relevant stakeholders.

2.6. Relevant Stakeholders' Discourses about Forcibly Displaced People

As displayed in the previous section, the research on corporate discourses on forced migration is fragmented and limited. However, the discourses of other actors (e.g., news media, NGOs, governments), have been researched in more depth and displayed some broadly acknowledged representational trends. Despite not being the subject of this study directly, they remain relevant, considering their interaction in the public sphere, the multistakeholder influences on forced migration (supra), and the explorative approach of this study. The public is likely exposed to these discourses more often than to the corporate ones, hence, they potentially influence the creation and reception of corporate discourses, as well as public attitudes towards forced migration. Furthermore, since some of the discourses contradict each other (e.g., news media often portray forced migrants as criminals, while NGOs as heroes; infra), there is a lack of cohesive public opinion on the topic, which increases the importance of being familiar with a broad range of discourses to avoid bias in the analysis. Moreover, the knowledge of other discourses surrounding forced migration is useful in sensitizing toward the discourses that might occur in the following analysis (infra). Therefore, in this section, we will present key findings on the discourses of news media, NGOs and humanitarian organizations, and governments and politicians respectively. These stakeholders have been proven to influence corporate engagement in forced migration, as introduced in section 2.1.

2.6.1. Discourses of News Media

Within the Northern context, negative and/or inaccurate representations predominate within all three categories of relevant stakeholders, as the next sections will evidence. To start with, news media representations are often racist and stereotyped, showing forcibly displaced people as criminals, a threat to the national economy and culture, and an uncontrollable mass negatively influencing the receiving country (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017). For instance, studies on British and American news media coverage have shown that the articles often implicitly and explicitly stress illegal aspects of immigration using terms such as 'illegal immigrants', 'gangs of refugees', or 'sneak into', therefore criminalizing forcibly displaced people. (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Quinsaat, 2014). Chouliaraki and colleagues (2017) demonstrated that information on security measures outweighs information on strategies to assist, further strengthening the discourse of

criminalization. The authors also revealed equal popularity of representations relying on 'quantity' or 'group' terms such as 'flood', 'stream', 'wave', 'horde', 'gang' (again), which create dehumanized and depersonalized representations, and bring associations of lost control and poor immigration management of the state. Furthermore, news media representations tend to highlight the 'Otherness' of forcibly displaced people and stress cultural differences between the incoming and host populations, portraying them as a threat to the national culture and values (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Zawadzka-Paluektau, 2023). Finally, forcibly displaced people are often blamed for depleting public resources, that host populations could otherwise benefit from (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017), therefore becoming a threat to receiving countries' economies and host societies' wellbeing. Altogether, these representations form highly negative discourses, which result in fearful and unwelcoming attitudes, and hostility.

While not all news media representations are essentially negative, the existing positively-loaded representations usually rely on the reversed narrative which transfers the emphasis from forcibly displaced people onto the receiving countries (Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017). Doing so, these representations mainly shape a positive image of receiving countries as saviors, while supposedly doing no harm to the image of the forcibly displaced. Yet, while the discourse gains a positive dimension by uplifting Northern society's self-perception, it comes at the cost of setting the representations of the forcibly displaced aside, promoting the unequal distribution of power (Gilbert, 2013; Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017). Moreover, the more charitable the host countries are portrayed to be, the more gratitude is socially demanded from incoming populations (Szkudlarek et al., 2021). As a result, forcibly displaced people are unable to express their needs due to the risk of being viewed as unappreciative, and they grow dependent on what the North regards as their needs (Kaleda, 2014). Hence, such discourses endorse Northern dominance by withholding the agency of the forcibly displaced.

Interestingly, news media discourses on Ukrainian refugees significantly differ from discourses on forcibly displaced from the Global South (Zawadzka-Paluektau, 2023). The topic of Ukrainian displacement is still rather recent, however, the studies that have been published until now indicate that Ukrainians are portrayed in a more neutral, or even positive manner (Zawadzka-Paluektau, 2023). The discourses found in Polish press coverage did not coincide with any negative discourses dominating communication about other populations of forced migrants. Supposedly, this stems from the cultural affinity and similar appearance of the Ukrainians, who do not stand out in host societies, and therefore are more likely to be

perceived as an us-group. This aligns with the findings of the European Social Survey, which revealed that skin color is among the key factors fueling anti-immigrant sentiments (Heath & Richards, 2016). These findings further prove racism embedded in the discourses on forcibly displaced populations from the Global South.

2.6.2. Discourses of NGOs and Humanitarian Organizations

Regarding NGO and humanitarian discourses, the researchers (Johnson, 2011; Ongenaert et al., 2023; Plambech et al., 2021) observed a duality of representations. The two most prominent trends are to portray forcibly displaced people as victims (agency-lacking, more negative representation), or as individuals (agency-focused, more positive representation). Both representation strategies belong to the broader humanitarian discourse of pity (Chouliaraki, 2012), which aims at overcoming the ambivalence towards the forcibly displaced people and motivating solidarity by emphasizing shared humanity. Interestingly, while Chouliaraki (2012) claimed that humanitarian discourses are moving away from the discourse of pity (towards a discourse of irony), more recent research revealed that pity-based representations are continuously popular and implemented (Ongenaert et al., 2023).

Within the first type of representation, the forcibly displaced people are represented as suffering, vulnerable, voiceless, passive, and dependent on Northern saviors (Johnson, 2011; Ongenaert & Joye, 2019). A lot of emphasis is placed on images of women and children, that traditionally bring associations of vulnerability and need of protection (Johnson, 2011; Plambech et al., 2021). Prevalent are also portrayals of people as masses – depersonalized and anonymous (Ongenaert et al., 2023). Together, these representations shape a problematic, dehumanized image of forcibly displaced people by oversimplifying their realities, generalizing them, and restricting their voice (Chouliaraki, 2012).

The second representational strategy creates a more positive image by embracing the agency of forcibly displaced people. The representations rely on positively connotated traits such as determination, talent, courage, rational decision-making (Ongenaert & Joye, 2019; Plambech et al., 2021), which more broadly shape the image of forcibly displaced people as fitting in the Northern society. Furthermore, people are more often presented as active, rather than passive, captured in the act of doing something, speaking, or thinking (Ongenaert et al., 2023). Therefore, within this representational strategy, the forcibly displaced people become empowered individuals, in contrast to agency-lacking masses (Ongenaert et al., 2023). Nevertheless, agency-focused representations can also be problematic due to the unrealism

and conditionality of images, which in most cases subjugate the help to positive traits of refugee individuals (Ongenaert & Joye, 2019).

The critique of agency-focused representations brings attention to the self-centralism of the Global Northern society in NGOs' and humanitarian discourses, in these regards similar to the news media discourses. In often cases, they position forcibly displaced people as secondary characters, similarly responding to the self-cultivation of audiences from the Global North, who like to see themselves as genuine and benevolent (Ongenaert & Joye, 2019). Even in the context of refugee organizations, which are expected to assist forcibly displaced people, representations appear problematic. Ongenaert and Joye (2019) concluded in their research on the press releases of international refugee organizations, that "organizations substantially dehumanize displaced people and subordinate them to the 'Western self' and national state interests" (p. 498), therefore manifesting power inequality.

2.6.3. Discourses of Governments and Politicians

Discourses of governments and politicians on forcibly displaced people have been highly shaped by an increasing trend of restricting immigration and asylum policies, that emerged in response to post-2014 migration flows (Pannia, 2021). The tightening of legislation has triggered perceptions of forcibly displaced people as security concerns and threats to social well-being. Unauthorized immigration is a crime in many countries of the Global North, penalized by imprisonment and/or fines (Pannia, 2021). Therefore, similarly to what has been observed in news media discourses, an imagined figure of a refugee is one of a threat or a criminal. Such discourses can perpetuate negative stereotypes and stigmatization of forcibly displaced people, further contributing to their marginalization and exclusion from society.

Simultaneously, legislation tends to victimize forcibly displaced people. Pannia (2021) provides a concrete example of this trend in the UK, where the government determines who is eligible for resettlement based on 'vulnerability'. Not only it prioritizes 'minorities within a minority' creating a dichotomy of less and more deserving incomers. It also suggests that most refugees are not vulnerable (enough) to be worth resettling. This can create unwelcoming attitudes following the lack of recognition of the problem and contextual distance.

In addition to the dual image of refugees as both a threat and a victim, the discourses of politicians often include an "us versus them" narrative that can negatively impact the social

acceptance of forcibly displaced people (Kirkwood, 2017). This narrative reinforces the idea of a homogeneous and exclusive national identity, which can be used to exclude refugees from the community. Furthermore, this narrative supports the image of politicians as powerful leaders, while obscuring power relations between the state and refugees, which can cause further marginalization (de Haas et al., 2020). On the other hand, research displayed the presence of humanized representations within political discourses, used by politicians to make the state and the nation morally accountable and boost morale and self-image within the 'us-group' (Kirkwood, 2017). While it can lead to more positive social attitudes, the narrative again problematically centralizes the Global North. Refugees become primarily objects of compassion of their Global Northern helpers, rather than subjects on their own.

3. Research Design

3.1. Method

To answer our central research question, we applied the qualitative method of MCDA. The method derives from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which studies the semiotic choices of authors within texts to discover underlying discourses and expose implicit and explicit power relations that these discourses carry (van Dijk, 1993). The main objective of CDA is to gain a deeper comprehension of social issues by denaturalizing representations and views that are taken-for-granted and/or appear as generally true due to the dominance of certain discourses but are specific to socio-cultural contexts instead (Machin & Mayr, 2012; van Dijk, 1993). Discourse is here seen as a social practice, a set of "ideas, values, identities, and sequences of activity" (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p.11), that is always contextually located and influences the social order. Discourses are inherently related to power relations, and the popularity of certain discourses over others signifies unequal distribution of control over the production, distribution, and consumption of texts between social groups (Fairclough, 1995). Therefore, discourses play an active role in shaping society, being capable of either (re)producing or challenging existing structures of dominance, hence, they become means of exercising power (van Dijk, 1993).

Therefore, the main assumption behind CDA is that language and society co-construct each other, meaning that social context shapes the usage of language, while choices in communication influence society by exercising certain relationships of power. Yet, while CDA is mostly limited to studying text only, MCDA recognizes other socially-shaped and society-shaping modes of communication (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Building upon the assumptions of CDA, MCDA acknowledges the contribution of the visual, and audio-visual communication to meaning-making processes, and the importance of studying all modes together to acquire an enhanced understanding of social structures (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Furthermore, it recognizes that even combined communication modes might produce separate and opposing, instead of supplementary meanings, therefore, studying all separately might create incomplete understanding. Hence, it offers a set of tools that enable to systematically study communicational affordances of images and sounds in addition to text. Simultaneously, being a sub-category of CDA, MCDA places equal importance on revealing social relationships of power and exposing discourses.

As shown in the literature review, power relations are strongly embedded in representations of forced migration within the context of different institutions, and the perceptions of forcibly displaced people in the Global North are strongly shaped by multiple discourses (e.g., Bergman Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020; Henriksen & Richey, 2022; Johnson, 2011; Madianou, 2019; Ongenaert et al., 2023). Yet, even though the studies on news media or humanitarian organizations displayed the significance and relevance of studying discourses about forced migration, very limited research has been made regarding the private sector. Looking at the findings of previous studies, which displayed power inequalities in other actors' communication about forced migration, as well as raised concerns regarding power dynamics in the relationship between corporations and humanitarianism it appeared relevant to further critically examine discourses of the private sector and specifically research how relationships of power are presented in corporate communication about forced migration. Looking at the centrality of power relations in (M)CDA, the method appeared suitable to study our key subject/central research question (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

Further, we opted for the multimodal approach, as the analysis aimed at visual-textual (Twitter posts), and audio-visual (YouTube videos) media genres, which recently gained popularity as channels in CSR communication (Camilleri, 2021), and have an affirmed high influence on shaping public awareness and discourse (Aruguete, 2017; Balasubramanian et al., 2021). The method was considered suitable as it provides tools for such analysis and enables to analyze these components combined (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Therefore, the topic covered in this research as well as the sample justified the choice of MCDA. Lastly, due to limited research on the topic, we adopted an explorative approach, aiming to identify and reveal corporate discourses on forced migration in social media and fill the academic gap.

3.2. Sample and Sampling

The analysis was conducted on the set of organic online content, posted by chosen companies belonging to the Tent Partnership for Refugees. The Tent Partnership for Refugees is an international non-profit organization founded in 2016, that currently comprises more than 300 major companies, with the mission to mobilize them to integrate social actions for refugees (Tent Partnership for Refugees, n.d.-b). We decided to choose the Tent partnership members, as the partnership creates an umbrella, uniting companies from different industries for a mutual cause – the improvement of the well-being of forcibly

displaced people. Considering the plethora of social and environmental issues that CSR can engage with, the partnership is a valid indicator of shared commitment to forced migration issues. Moreover, the commitment is expected to be reflected in the communication strategies.

The preliminary attempt to data collection enabled to roughly identify companies that are active online communicators of their refugee-related activities, therefore potentially giving an insightful look into the discourses and trends of the private sector. Based on that, five companies were analyzed: Google, McKinsey & Company, Airbnb, Starbucks, and IKEA, all being major, multinational players of different industries. We decided to analyze different industries to acquire more diverse insights and a broader understanding of corporate discourses around forced migration, which is currently limited within the academia; and because industry-specific factors can potentially influence CSR (Kim, 2019). The companies represent the technological, professional service, hospitality, food and beverage, and retail industries respectively. The scale of their operations and multinational presence establishes the companies' representative status per each industry. Moreover, it sets the importance of analyzing the discourses of these companies due to their broad reach to international audiences, and therefore engagement, influence, and responsiveness to international (mainly Global Northern) discourses. Since the research focus was mostly placed on tech companies until now, by analyzing the communication of different industries, we fill in the theoretical gap. Moreover, analyzing one representative company per industry provides a more diverse sample and potentially more diverse findings. Hence, it opens doors for a more comprehensive understanding of the private sector's discourses, potentially also indicating differences between industries, suggesting industry-specific discourses, as well as establishing coherences and/or dissimilarities between the companies involved in the Tent partnership for refugees in terms of discourses they provide.

The preliminary exploration of data indicated that companies communicate about forced migration in a limited and fragmented manner, correspondingly to the findings of Ioannou (2015). This is also congruent with the research of Ajayi and Mmutle (2021), who discovered that too excessive communication of CSR might harm the credibility of CSR engagement in the eyes of stakeholders, highlighting the importance of maintaining a moderate level of CSR communication. Furthermore, especially in the case of forced migration, both the action and the communication are often linked to occurring events, and therefore time-specific, rather than continuous. Therefore, we decided to implement a mixed method, focusing on different media genres, over a relatively broad period. The researched

genres included Twitter posts and YouTube videos published on the official social media profiles of the companies under study. We focused on Twitter because it is a primary corporate communication platform (Aruguete, 2017). The motivation behind choosing YouTube was twofold. Firstly, YouTube is commonly used by companies complementarily to Twitter (Liao & Mak, 2019), which has proven true within the dataset – Twitter posts often contained links to YouTube videos. Secondly, because videos were demonstrated to be exceptionally powerful in communicating about injustices faced by disadvantaged minorities, hence became a recommended medium for communicating socially-focused CSR (Kesavan et al., 2013). Due to the matters of feasibility, as well as the very specific aim of expanding the understanding of discourses shaped by the private sector, the sample was restrained to company-generated, that is organic content. The external responses to the studied content (e.g., comments, re-tweets) were not included. Deciding for such a limitation, we do not claim that external engagement is irrelevant to the creation of general discourse on the topic. Rather, we aimed at maintaining a strict focus on 'organic' corporate discourses.

We investigated the content published between 2015 and 2022 inclusive. The research period was determined by two events of special significance in the history and research on forced migration: the mediatization of the Syrian emergency since 2015, that popularized forced migration discourses in public debates (Hellman & Lerkkanen, 2019); and the Ukrainian emergency, which started in the spring of 2022, and has been an important topic in public debates throughout the whole 2022. We selected only the content published in English, or with company-provided translation available.

The sampling was conducted based on specific keywords and search formulas, and by searching through the official social media profiles of the companies. We took into account all English language profiles of a given company and its branches of humanitarian focus (e.g., for Twitter profiles of Google: @Google, @Googleorg, @GoogleUK, @GoogleEurope). We used the keywords of 'refugee', 'asylum', and 'forcibly displaced'. Additionally, as the preliminary data collection has indicated that the previously listed keywords lead to the content regarding forcibly displaced people from the Global South mostly, we searched through supplementary keywords of 'Ukrainian' and 'Ukraine', which enabled to collect data concerning the Ukrainian emergency. For Twitter, we used advanced search formulas, that enabled to search through multiple channels for multiple keywords [e.g., for Twitter posts of Google: "(refugee, OR asylum, OR forcibly OR displaced, OR Ukrainian, OR Ukraine) (from:Google OR from:Googleorg OR from:googleeurope OR from:GoogleUK) lang:en"]. On YouTube, we searched for each keyword separately, directly

on a profile of a given company. Resultantly, we collected 65 Twitter posts and 25 YouTube videos.

Moreover, we applied additional sampling requirements. For Twitter, we collected and analyzed posts including inserted images and organic content linked in the Twitter posts, including videos as well as press releases, stories, and blog posts (hereafter: website entries). The additional content was analyzed only if it was originally posted on another social media profile or the website of the same company. The linked content from other websites was not considered, and in these cases, the posts were analyzed only in terms of the text written by the company, and an image if applicable. In the case of YouTube, we analyzed short-form videos only. Videos longer than 10 minutes were eliminated from the data collection. Hence, we additionally analyzed 7 YouTube videos and 19 website entries. Therefore, the total sample contained 65 Twitter posts including 34 images, 32 YouTube videos, and 19 website entries (Table 1).

Table 1: *Overview of Exemplary Texts by Units of Analysis*

Units of Analysis	**Sources**	**Number of Exemplary Texts**	**Units Specification**
Twitter posts	Google's official Twitter accounts: @Google, @googleeurope, @GoogleUK, @Googleorg	16	incl. 7 images, 7 website entries, 2 videos
	McKinsey & Company's official Twitter account: @McKinsey	7	incl. 4 images, 4 website entries
	Airbnb's official Twitter account: @Airbnb	13	incl. 8 images, 1 website entry
	Starbucks' official Twitter accounts: @Starbucks, @StarbucksNews	5	incl. 2 images, 3 website entries, 1 video
	IKEA's official Twitter accounts: @IKEA, @IKEAFoundation, @IKEACanada, @IKEAUSA, @IKEAUK	24	incl.13 images, 4 website entries, 4 videos
Total		65	

YouTube videos	Google's official YouTube account: @Google, @Google.org	7	N/A
	McKinsey & Company's official YouTube account: @McKinsey&Company	2	N/A
	Airbnb's official YouTube accounts: @Airbnb, @AirbnbPublicPolicy	2	N/A
	Starbucks's official YouTube accounts: @StarbucksCoffee	2	N/A
	IKEA's official YouTube accounts: @IKEA, @IKEAFoundation, @IKEACanada, @IKEA Switzerland	12	N/A
Total		25	

3.3. Data Analysis and Operationalization

For the analysis, we adopted a mix of inductive and deductive approaches. The analysis is partially shaped by the findings from theoretical literature and discursive devices of methodological literature, which signifies the deductive approach. Simultaneously, we maintained an open look for new representations, resulting from the data, which is typical for the inductive approach.

The analysis was operationalized through the usage of discursive devices that analyze textual, visual and/or audiovisual representations, as proposed by Machin & Mayr (2012). Specifically, we analyzed modes of representation of social actors and social action, as means to exercise relationships of power. The authors' choices in visual and textual representation of people, such as an emphasis (or the lack of emphasis) on certain elements of identity, situate represented people in the social power dynamic (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Similarly, decisions regarding the portrayals of action determine the agency and shape the narrative of activity or passivity, which also inherently implies power dynamics (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Within this study, we selected seven discursive devices for the final analysis. They were selected based on a test analysis, conducted at first on a broader range of discursive devices, which enabled to determine the most suitable ones and therefore increase the reliability of the

research. Hence, in the final analysis, the provided portrayals of people were examined through the prism of specification and generalization, nomination and functionalization, suppression, and transitivity and presupposition (supra). The representations of refugee actions were studied from the perspective of transitivity and presupposition. Combined, these devices provided a multi-dimensional understanding of the created discourses and manifested relationships power.

The analysis was conducted systematically; all elements of the sample were examined by applying the same set of discursive devices. The discursive devices were clearly defined and exemplified prior to the analysis to avoid confusion or misclassification during the analysis itself. The definitions and examples will be provided in the results section for reasons of transparency. The analysis was conducted for each of the elements separately, and the results were inserted into a coding table to facilitate the process of finding patterns among media genres, media-specific discourses, and/or industry-specific representations. Implementing such a systematic analytical framework was found to improve the validity and reliability of the research by allowing for a more consistent approach to the analysis.

Lastly, the study did not indicate any ethical issues. The operationalization responds positively to all requirements of the Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, as set forth by the Netherlands Association of Universities (VSNU). No potential harm of any kind (physical, psychological, or reputational) is envisaged for the researcher, and no important details about the purpose of the research are either withheld or misrepresented. The research is not built upon any personal or sensitive data. The participant-protecting clauses do not apply, as the research did not require the engagement of any participants.

3.3.1. Author's Positionality

As explained earlier, discourses are specific to certain contexts. Consequently, each person is familiar with different discourses while clueless about others, depending on their background – origin, language, upbringing, living environment, education, experience, etc. Because of that, people perceive communication acts differently, and it is impossible to achieve universal meanings (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The realization of this lies at the core of (M)CDA, which acknowledges that the author's positionality will influence the reception and the analysis of texts (Machin & Mayr, 2012; van Dijk, 1993). Indeed, also beyond the Critical Discourse Studies, images and sounds were found to be polysemous – that is having multiple meanings – which may evoke perplexity or ambiguity among receivers. The aspects

described above make it impossible to establish singular meanings or universally correct interpretations. This creates an issue of subjectivity, which is often addressed as violating the reliability and validity of (M)CDA, and poses one of the main challenges to discourse analysts. One practice to deal with this inherent subjectivity of conducting a discourse analysis lies in establishing positionality, that is the personal context under which the analysis will be conducted (Rogers, 2013). Further, we embraced reflexivity, that is the continuous re-evaluation of personal perspectives throughout the analytical process (Zienkowski, 2017).

As a white European woman born and raised in Poland, and living in the Netherlands at the time of conducting this research, I am an outsider to the group whose representations were analyzed hereafter, and my position is privileged in comparison to that group. Hence, I am socio-culturally distant from the analyzed group. Such a relationship is often expected to introduce bias within the research, as it poses a threat of failing to recognize stereotypical or colonial orders (Yancy, 2008). However, acknowledging that due to my background, some communicational choices might appear to me as neutral, I embraced reflexivity as a strategy to improve the reliability and validity of this research. It had been hoped that my background in cultural studies, and a preceding literature review, had made me more open-minded and sensitive towards perspectives other than my own.

Simultaneously, I am an insider to the group whose discourses and ideologies affect the imageries of forcibly displaced people provided – a widely defined Global Northern population. Since the analyzed companies originated in the Global North, and operate predominantly in the Northern markets, I am among the main target audience of the communication analyzed hereafter. Hence, my perspective likely allows me to better understand social mechanisms, which shape the analyzed representations. By combining this reflexive approach with the understanding of insider perspectives at the level that I acquired through academic endeavors, I aim to deconstruct the explicit and implicit power relations, discourses, and ideologies embedded in the sample.

4. Results

The data analysis revealed heterogeneity of representations in corporate social media communication about forced migration. More specifically, the analysis disclosed three main themes emerging throughout both Twitter and YouTube communication with unequal intensity, and often unevenly distributed between industries and/or media genres. Within these themes, forcibly displaced people were the most often portrayed as (1) 'empowered' individuals, or (2) receivers of help. Less commonly present were issue- rather than people-focused representations of (3) forced migration as a crisis. The first two themes displayed the presence of sub-themes, distinguished based on evident representational trends. The overview of themes and sub-themes is presented in Table 2.

Importantly, the companies presented a tendency to communicate about forcibly displaced people for both self- and society-serving motives, and mainly in an informative manner. However, self-serving communication appeared significantly more often. As indicated in the literature (supra), and as will be presented in the following chapter, this influences the created discourses to a high extent.

Table 2: *Overview of themes and sub-themes*

Theme	**Sub-themes**
Forcibly Displaced People as 'Empowered' Individuals	Forcibly Displaced People as Family and Friends Forcibly Displaced People as Employees and Students Forcibly Displaced People as Heroes and Fighters
Forcibly Displaced People as Receivers of Help	Forcibly Displaced People as Victims Forcibly Displaced People as Objects of CSR Distinct Representations of Forcibly Displaced Ukrainians
Forced Migration as a Crisis	

4.1. Forcibly Displaced People as 'Empowered' Individuals

As presented in the theoretical framework, discourses about forcibly displaced people prevalent in the Global North often rely on inaccurate, stereotyped, and/or racist representations (e.g., Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Pannia, 2021; Plambech et al., 2021). These representations strengthen the notion of forcibly displaced people as 'Others', and thereby enforce existing, unequal relationships of power between Northern and Southern societies. The problematic nature of such representations seems to be acknowledged by the analyzed companies. The analysis revealed that much of the content implements representations that counteract such narratives, and enhance the image and perception of forcibly displaced people among Northern societies. Forcibly displaced people are then presented as similar, fitting, and/or able to adjust to host societies, that is, less distant and evidently 'Other'. As evidenced within data, it can be done in a threefold manner, that is by representing forcibly displaced people as (1) families and friends, (2) employees and students, and (3) heroes and fighters. Each of these representation types potentially enables Northern audiences targeted by corporate communication endeavors to acquire a (possibly new) positive, non-dominant perspective on forcibly displaced people. In that sense, the representations included in this theme have an empowering potential by challenging power inequalities between the Northern populations and forcibly displaced people, as well as stereotypical and racist discourses. Nonetheless, as will be pointed out further in the analysis, these representations are not free of problematic aspects, that in some cases disrupt their empowering value. Hence, we emphasize their empowering potential as a step towards positive change, rather than see them as fully empowering.[5]

4.1.1. Forcibly Displaced People as Families and Friends

Within the sub-theme showing *forcibly displaced people as families and friends*, forcibly displaced people are represented as similar through how they perform normative social roles typical for Northern societies within the family or friendship settings, and/or representationally embedded in the Northern society through interpersonal relationships. In short, the representations captured under this sub-theme enable Northern societies to view forcibly displaced people as families alike, or friends. Both of these relationship types bring

[5] For this reason, we decided to insert the term *empowered* in single quotation marks in the title. For a more in-depth discussion about empowerment see Drydyk (2013).

positive associations of closeness and an idea of affinity, relatedness, and liking, which is often achieved through the usage of discursive strategies like specification or nomination (Machin & Mayr, 2012).

As mentioned, one of the strategies creating the discourse of similarity is specification. The specification refers to representing social actors as specific individuals and is contradictory to generalization - the strategy of showing them as a generic type (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Many of the collected data units tell personal stories of individuals, either in a first-person or a third-person form, which shows them as primarily individuals, rather than a collective of forcibly displaced people. For example, the individualization is visible in the video posted by Airbnb Public Policy (2017) on their YouTube channel, where one of the hosts describes his experience with welcoming Abdoulaye, who is a refugee, as follows: "For me there is no difference between us and Abdoulaye. Abdoulaye is just another roommate ... someone who joined our home and everything is going smoothly" (00:00:49). Similarly, individualization is evident in Google's Twitter post (2018) as presented in Figure 1, and the linked article. The article enables to identify the photographed people with the characters of the described story. They are Abid – a Google employee, and Nour – Abid's neighbor and recent friend, who fled from Syria with his family. Both posts show forcibly displaced people as specific individuals, rather than a population, by introducing them with a name and

Figure 1

A screenshot of a tweet posted by Google [@Google] on September 20, 2018.

situating them in a social and relational context. Both men are represented in close relationships with Northern people, which proves that the boundaries of 'Otherness' and dissimilarity are socially constructed.

This process of specification works in line with discursive devices of nomination and functionalization. As defined by Machin and Mayr (2012) "participants can be nominated in terms of who they are or functionalized by being depicted in terms of what they do" (p. 81). In the above examples, the actors are nominated, and their persona gains a deeper dimension than the refugee function. The fact that Abdoulaye and Nour have been forcibly displaced is of secondary importance. First and foremost, they are a friend, a roommate, a dad, with these traits defining who they are more than belonging to the community of forcibly displaced people. The usage of the adverb 'just' in both posts strengthens this positioning, normalizing Abdoulaye's and Nour's presence in Northern society.

The specification and nomination combined enable to narratively background the controversial aspect of their origin that might cause negative attitudes among the prejudiced members of Northern society, and foreground their belonging to the host societies by representing them in socially acceptable, recognizable, and positively associated roles of a dad or a friend. Moreover, both relationships and social belonging are legitimized by in-group, personal insights from Northern citizens, which can be considered more trustworthy for Northern audiences. Therefore, these posts, and similar others within the dataset, rework the popular power relationships, by positioning forcibly displaced people as equal, rather than subordinate towards host societies, therefore challenging the us-them dichotomy. This finding partially opposes the popular news media discourse of forcibly displaced people constituting a social threat and extends earlier studies on corporate discourses where, to the best of our knowledge, the theme has not been distinguished.

4.1.2. Forcibly Displaced People as Employees and Students

Similar effects of breaking the us-them dichotomy can be observed in posts that can be categorized into the theme of *forcibly displaced people as employees and students*. Here, the forcibly displaced people are represented in a job or school setting, which aligns with two of the most common forms of CSR action for this particular group, being workforce integration and training (supra). The dataset revealed that from the companies under scrutiny Google, Starbucks, and IKEA implement such forms of action and communicate about it. Yet, there is no consistent way through which all three companies post about their CSR in

these regards. Much depends on whether the communication is aimed to serve primarily the society or the company (or both).

When the communication is grounded in the society-serving motivation, which can be recognized for example by the dominance of messages focus on the beneficiaries, rather than the company or CSR, the actors are more often portrayed as active. This corresponds with the discursive device of transitivity. Specifically, transitivity covers the discursive implications of representing social actors as acting or not acting, as well as who has agency, and who experiences the consequences of the actions conducted by the active (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The active representations of forcibly displaced people were identified in various videos, including the YouTube video by McKinsey & Company (2022; Figure 2) and one by IKEA (2018; Figure 3), as well as corresponding fragments of text from both videos as transcribed below.

> "After two years in Alsama I can speak, I can shout, I can sing, I can do whatever I want … now I'm here, I'm speaking English, I feel empowered and I feel like a confident, inspiring girl … I want to become a businesswoman" (McKinsey & Company, 2022, 00:02:23).

> "It makes more sense to society and the economy to get people who are long-term unemployed, with skills to offer into the workplace. They [refugees] can bring a wealth of experience, they can bring language skills, diversity, loyalty … There's been really star candidates who have stood out, have really exhibited the values that IKEA are looking for, and they've gone on to have interviews and then been made offers of employment to join us" (IKEA, 2018, 00:00:27).

Figure 2

A screenshot from a YouTube video posted by McKinsey & Company [@McKinsey] on September 21, 2022, 00:02:28.

Figure 3

A screenshot from a YouTube video posted by IKEA [@IKEA] on June 1, 2018, 00:01:18.

In these, and more videos from the dataset the forcibly displaced people are presented as acting both visually and textually. Visually, they are depicted while performing a certain activity – either studying or working. They are immersed in the task; not looking into the camera, which peeks at them from a close distance. Textually, they are represented as active through the usage of action verbs (e.g., speak, do, want to become, bring) and vocabulary connotating well-evaluated performance in a workplace (e.g., stood out, exhibited the values). The workforce integration is justified with proven hard work and represents the forcibly displaced people as valuable employees, which is further supported by listing features appreciated in a workplace such as experience or language skills. Similarly, in school settings, they are represented as learning, personally developing, and benefiting from the undertaken effort (e.g., empowered, confident) Hence, they are portrayed as hard-workers and achievers.

Simultaneously, the forcibly displaced people are introduced to viewers as specific individuals, with a similar effect as in the case of the sub-theme of *forcibly displaced people as families and friends*. They become less of members of the forcibly displaced group, and more of individuals with their own stories, dreams, achievements. The close positioning of the camera gives the audience an illusion of space-sharing and builds a certain sense of (physical) togetherness. The close shots on the interviewed individuals create an impression of talking to/with them, as opposed to talking about them. Therefore, their 'activeness' is supported by personal engagement in the created content.

How are transitivity and specification important for discourse creation is through the agency which is given to forcibly displaced people with such representations. Agency here is understood as "autonomous personal involvement in activities … attributed to an activity with greater effective power" (Drydyk, 2013, p. 253) In this case, the 'greater effective power' refers to the enhanced ability to influence representations of the self. Often (if not always), the perception of minorities (including forcibly displaced people) is subject to discourses created by dominant out-groups, in this case, Northern societies. It is visualized for instance through the criminalization or the victimization popular in discourses of other relevant stakeholders (supra), that rely on Northern-centric viewpoints and uphold Northern dominance (e.g., Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017; Ongenaert et al., 2023; Plambech et al., 2021). Opposingly, the representations as exemplified above, where the forcibly displaced people are portrayed as active and being given a voice, provide the forcibly displaced with the ability to engage in conversations and enhance their opportunities to create knowledge and influence Northern discourses about themselves.

While this does not signify full empowerment, as the appearance of forcibly displaced people in communication is still regulated by the private sector, it de-centralizes the discourses and somewhat reduces the asymmetry of power.

On top of that, the representations of forcibly displaced people as employees and hard-workers challenge the existing discourse of refugees as an economic threat to host countries. Instead, they prove the will and ability of forcibly displaced people to contribute to the country's economy, rather than solely exploit social benefits. The functionalization that appears when forcibly displaced people are primarily seen as workers/employees positively affects the discourse through how it legitimizes them as society members. Hence, the representations to an extent criticize North-centralism of prevailing discourses, disclosing their discriminatory foundations. However, importantly they can simultaneously cause the marginalization of people who can not work or do not have an entrepreneurial mindset (Bergman Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020).

However, the sub-theme of *forcibly displaced people as employees and students* also entails other types of representations, that represent forcibly displaced people in a less fortunate manner. An example of this is Starbucks Coffee's tweet (2017) communicating about the company's plans to hire refugees presented in the following manner: "Refugee hiring will span 75 countries over 5 years – not only in the US." (Figure 4). The tweet is fundamentally self-serving. Not only it lacks any personalized representations of the group that the company claims to help, but also backgrounds the refugees in the conveyed message. It is not about refugees, but about 'refugee hiring'. Hence, the people are rendered invisible behind the company's actions. Moreover, this creates a contrasting image of private actors as active helpers, and forcibly displaced people as passive receivers of help, enforcing the us-them dichotomy. While this topic will be further elaborated in section 4.2, it is important to note the lack of agency of forcibly displaced people over the helping process that such phrasing entails.

Figure 4

A screenshot of a tweet posted by Starbucks [@StarbucksA] on February 5, 2017.

Furthermore, the emphasis on hiring in 75 countries highlights the scale of forced migration that already evokes negative attitudes related to host countries' limited capacity to welcome immigrants. Forcibly displaced people are represented through generalization, which makes them a depersonalized mass, which is so often feared in public discourses (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008). However, on a more positive note, the tweet simultaneously communicates that the forcibly displaced people are suitable employees across many countries, advocating their belonging within diverse socio-cultural circumstances. The discourse of refugees posing an economic threat is hence rejected to a broader scale.

To conclude, this sub-theme confirms and extends the previous research on corporate discourses. Firstly, in line with Haydon et al. (2021) and Szkudlarek et al. (2022), it confirms that corporations often represent forcibly displaced people within the job setting, and similarly suggests, that it can positively influence their perceived belonging to Western society, challenging the image of a threat. Nonetheless, the study also confirmed that the representations can be harmful, especially when the communication is primarily self-serving (e.g., Starbucks Coffee, 2017), extending the critique of employee representations (Bergman Rosamond & Gregoratti, 2020; Kohl-Arenas, 2017). Simultaneously, no evidence of representing forcibly displaced people as entrepreneurs has been found, contrary to previous research (Haydon et al. 2021). Instead, in many cases forcibly displaced people were represented as students. Hence the study contributes to previous research by introducing a new theme within corporate representations.

4.1.3. Forcibly Displaced People as Heroes and Fighters

Lastly, the forcibly displaced people are often presented as 'empowered' individuals in the sub-theme of *forcibly displaced people as heroes and fighters.* Within this type of representation, the focus is placed on the positive traits associated with mental strength and resilience. These traits are shown as assets that helped the forcibly displaced people overcame the difficulties of fleeing their own country, sacrificing their previous lives for a dream of the better, and struggles of settling in elsewhere. Due to the emphasis on strength, resilience, or courage they do not appear as victims of their fate, but rather fighters and heroes, who took matters into their own hands and pursued a better future for themselves.

In parallel to the two aforementioned sub-themes, also in this case the forcibly displaced people are mainly portrayed as active individuals, which refers to the discursive devices of specification, nomination and, transitivity. The posts categorized under this sub-theme cover personal stories of one or more forcibly displaced people, who are introduced with their names and narrate the stories. The traumas of war and struggles of displacement are shared - "we [Maher and his family] said – if something happened, if bomb falling, we die together" (Google, 2017a, 00:00:53; Figure 5). However, the conclusion is always positive and motivational. Maher concludes: "if you feel you don't have the opportunity, never, ever give up" (Google, 2017a, 00:03:03). Similarly, in the IKEA USA's video (2020, Figure 6), Precious, being one of the characters says: "Regardless of whatever comes your way, or whatever happens to you, do not give up on yourself" (00:00:05). Both Maher and Precious are portrayed in control, motivated and inspiring, giving advice or a kind of a pep-talk to the Northern audiences. Through the first-person narration implemented in the videos, forcibly displaced people seem to directly address the viewers. Their voice is powerful, as it enables them to firstly establish a relationship; and secondly, temporarily acquire a dominant position by being the ones who give, rather than receive. Even though the act of giving advice is incomparable to providing humanitarian aid, the strict humanitarian order of giving North and receiving South is situationally reversed, showing that forcibly displaced people have things to offer to their Northern hosts. Hence, providing such representations corporate actors are able to challenge the image of forcibly displaced people as victims, as established by news media and humanitarian discourses.

Figure 5

A screenshot from a YouTube video posted by Google [@Google] on June 20, 2017a, 00:03:08.

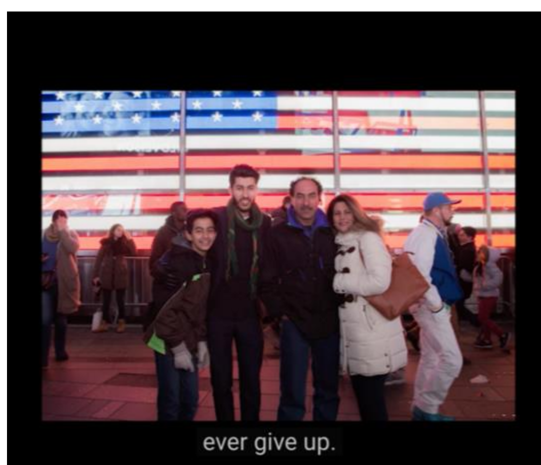
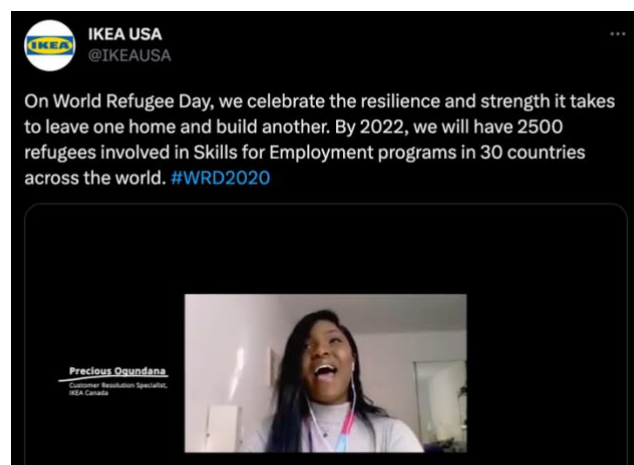


Figure 6

A screenshot of a tweet posted by IKEA [@IKEAUSA] on June 20, 2020.



Furthermore, the ability to give advice signifies a certain similarity, as the conclusions that forcibly displaced people have drawn from personal experiences turn out to apply to Northern realities. In consequence, the stark contrast between the groups starts to blur. This is developed, as the videos present a dream of better life and care of the family as the main motivations behind fleeing (or action). While the context of war might be hard to relate to for Northern audiences, the expressed values (e.g., well-being, family), and motivations (e.g., migration to seek a more prosperous life) are recognizable. Especially when supported with visual representations such as family photos (Figure 5), they are likely to evoke empathy. This, combined with the blurring differences provides ground for contesting the us-them dichotomy, which might be important for companies to acquire the stakeholders' support and appreciation towards their actions. Otherwise, the positive reception of CSR could be disrupted, if clashed with stakeholders' negative attitude towards forcibly displaced people shaped by other institutions. Lastly, by rejecting the dichotomy, the companies contribute to challenging power inequalities between Global North and South.

4.2. Forcibly Displaced People as Receivers of Help

Another prominent theme within corporate representations positions forcibly displaced people as receivers of help. In this case, communication is more often motivated by self rather than social interests, which influences the choice of communicational strategies. Generally, as will be exemplified in the following sub-sections, corporate actions are foregrounded, while the representations of forcibly displaced people constitute more of a context or reason to the communicated CSR. The outcome of that is threefold – the people are either victimized to rationalize CSR activities (section 4.2.1), overshadowed, or rendered invisible (section 4.2.2), all having consequences on displayed power relationships.

4.2.1. Forcibly Displaced People as Victims

As our analysis shows, another way in which displaced people are presented is that of victims, who are vulnerable, suffering, and dependent on Northern saviors. The theme was mainly covered by Google and IKEA, which offer products as CSR (instead of for example training or employment). This indicates that the type of chosen CSR activity influences communication practices and creates differences between sectors/companies depending on their CSR choices.

This narrative has been common in previous research on other stakeholders' communication including NGOs, humanitarian organizations, and governments (e.g., Ongenaert et al., 2023; Plambech et al., 2021). Within the dataset, it was especially common in YouTube videos. Importantly, the theme visualized differently in corporate communication, possibly due to a different goal behind communication. Instead of showing people as victims to evoke sympathy and encourage donations, as in the case of NGOs and humanitarian organizations, companies appear to use such images to justify and rationalize their CSR activities and encourage support from their customer base in the long term. Therefore, as will be exemplified based on data units, this kind of communication highlights the self-serving motivation that is deeply embedded in the portrayal of forcibly displaced people as victims. The analysis revealed that these kinds of representations result in the entrenchment of existing relationships of power.

This is evident in Google's YouTube videos about their support for refugees. The videos focus on the technological innovation and impact that the Google solutions and team are having, with little time for the people to express themselves. The narratives are led from the perspective of the Google team or partners, who implement and introduce the newly developed solutions (Figure 7, Figure 8), with extensive sections on them sharing their perspectives on the conflict and the reality of the people they provide help to. These highlight the self-serving nature of communication, with a high focus on the aspects that directly benefit the company. Moreover, the narrators use an informative tone, reflected in the text embedded in the videos (Figure 7, Figure 8, Figure 9), which leaves little space for discussion, and therefore enforces Google's perspectives. Considering that the narration is fully led by (and therefore controlled by) Northern actors, this introduces bias into the

Figure 7

A screenshot from a YouTube video posted by Google [@Google] on June 20, 2017b, 00:00:37.

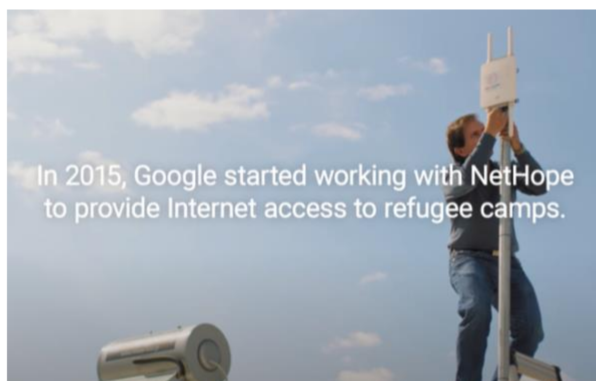


Figure 8

A screenshot from a YouTube video posted by Google [@Google] on June 20, 2017c, 00:02:03.

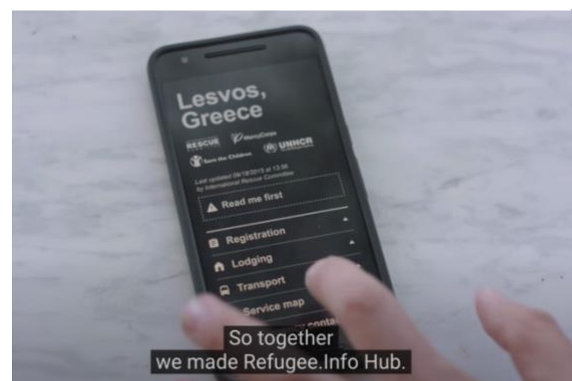
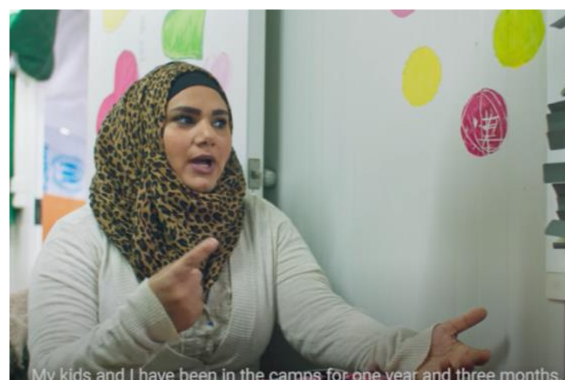


Figure 9

A screenshot from a YouTube video posted by Google [@Google] on June 20, 2017c, 00:01:05.

Figure 10

A screenshot from a YouTube video posted by Google [@Google] on June 20, 2017b, 00:02:23.



communication, due to the lack of insider perspectives on the topic. Therefore, the Northern actors maintain their powerful position, upholding existing relationships of power by controlling message production (Fairclough, 1995). In contrast, the forcibly displaced people are portrayed in a manner that emphasizes the points made by the narrators or to better display the impact that the new solutions are having. Their role in the video is reduced to one of people in need, or to simply forcibly displaced people. This takes away their agency and reduces them to victims, perpetuating the harmful, existing relationships of power. This is the case in Figure 9, where forcibly displaced people are generalized through group portrayals with no focus on them as specific individuals or contextualization. Their suffering is emphasized through the assisting text: "having survived this hellish trip to face chaos" (Google, 2017c, 00:01:05), which simultaneously reduces their agency and shows them in lack of control over their destiny through the usage of passive verb forms (e.g., having survived). Unlike in the sub-theme of *forcibly displaced people as heroes and fighters*, where the acts of survival signify strength and bravery, here the emphasis is placed on their continuous vulnerability towards incontrollable fate ("to face chaos"). Hence, they are represented as victims rather than agents, and subordinated to Northern saviors.

Even in cases where the forcibly displaced people are given the opportunity to voice out their perspectives (Figure 10), the focus is only on their struggle and victimhood. In this video, a mother is discussing her situation in the refugee camp and states that "My kids and I have been in the camps for one year and three months, which is very hard, it's hard… Now I use the Internet to communicate with my family abroad" (Google, 2017b, 00:02:23). Represented in the setting of a refugee camp, struggling to make ends meet, she is

undoubtedly a victim. Moreover, the key message of her statement is that she benefits from the new technology that Google designed. A similar correlation appears in the video posted by IKEA Canada (2015) on the company's engagement in providing light to refugee camps, where a refugee girl states that "Nighttime is especially hard. We can't see anything in front of us, and we're scared. I wish there was power so we could feel safe" (00:01:24). This is later followed in the video with the girls' mom stating that "Light is everything here. There is nothing more beautiful than light" (IKEA Canada, 2015, 00:02:57). Despite a given voice, the portrayal is passive as the women's well-being is dependent on Northern corporations, instead of their own actions, identically as in case of generalized representations. In this case, individualization does not bring empowerment, as it is combined with functionalization, which limits the role of represented people to being forcibly displaced. This type of communication has twofold consequences. Firstly, it strengthens the gendered, oppressive portrayals of women as icons of vulnerability present in humanitarian discourses (Plambech et al., 2021). Secondly, it creates a contrast within the discursive device of transitivity where the companies are portrayed as active helpers, while refugees are merely passive receivers of help. This also simultaneously reinforces the us-them division between the powerful Global North and the powerless Global South. In consequence, such representations correspond with oppressive relationships of power, by supporting Northern dominance and control.

Hence, the corporate representations of forcibly displaced people as victims largely confirm the discourses discovered in the communication of other stakeholders, with women as icons of vulnerability being only one among many examples. The fact that forcibly displaced people are situated as secondary characters within the communications corresponds with the findings of Ongenaert and Joye (2019) on the discourses of refugee organizations. Refugee organizations similarly subordinate forcibly displaced people to Northern actors reinforcing power inequalities. This also confirms the cross-industrial influences on discourse creation. The communicated CSR of both Google and IKEA presented in these and more videos from the dataset has been performed in partnerships with humanitarian organizations, and the humanitarian discourses evidently transferred to corporate communication practices.

Moreover, the common presence of group, unindividualized representations also aligns with previous findings of Ongenaert and Joye (2019). However, this case is more nuanced due to a differing communication purpose. In corporate communication, such collective representations do not necessarily support the regime of pity, but rather highlight the self-interest of corporate actors, and confirm their situatedness within the philantrocapitalist logic (Haydon et al., 2021). This further correlates with the corporate

discourse of forced migration as a technological challenge, and the research by Henriksen and Richey (2022), which revealed that corporations tend to perceive humanitarian emergencies as development opportunities. Yet, this research proves, that such an approach extends beyond the technological sector, and applies more broadly to the companies that conduct CSR by developing products or through product donations. The analyzed data units exemplify this with the high emphasis placed by companies on informing about the products, which is done instead of focusing on social aspects of the issues these companies interact with.

4.2.2. Forcibly Displaced People as Objects of CSR

Many Twitter posts indicated the trend of representing forcibly displaced people as objects of CSR. While this sub-theme appeared less commonly than the previously discussed ones, it emerged across most sectors. The forcibly displaced people are continuously represented as beneficiaries, but their visual representations, voice, and perspectives are fully lacking. Following, personal traits, feelings, and emotions are not communicated either. This is contrary to the sub-theme of *forcibly displaced people as victims*, which at least recognizes the aspects of human suffering or leaves space for expression. Therefore, despite the same basis of both sub-themes, the representational outcomes significantly differ. The representations of *forcibly displaced people as objects of CSR* lead to invisibility, which further strengthens their position as agency-lacking and dependent on Northern saviors.

Figure 11

A screenshot of a tweet posted by Starbucks [@StarbucksNews] on September 14, 2015.

Figure 12

A screenshot of a tweet posted by Airbnb [@Airbnb] on June 20, 2018.

Moreover, the communication displays even more extensive focus on CSR activities and a greater self-centric approach.

The analysis of the dataset allows to hypothesize two reasons behind the differences in communication approaches – the choice of CSR activities and the choice of a medium. The victimization commonly occurred when the company utilized YouTube, and aimed at promoting the product, which has been designed as a solution for a humanitarian issue, and needed to be presented 'in action'. On the contrary, within this sub-theme, the companies promote other types of CSR activities, such as financial donations (Figure 11), or the development of support programs (Figure 12, Figure 13). Moreover, the trend appears more commonly on Twitter than YouTube. As a medium, Twitter is primarily text-based rather than visual-focused (Hodeghatta & Sahney, 2016), which creates a favorable environment for (possibly unintended) underrepresentation. Many posts displayed a lack of attention to the choice of visuals. For example, in Figure 11 the text informing about Starbucks' CSR activity is assisted with a simple image containing merely the company logo, which could be inserted in any post. The visual is completely unrelated to the text and evidently used for promotional purposes which highlights the self-serving motivation. However, on the textual level, forcibly displaced people are also underrepresented. The tweet itself talks about the company's support to "refugee relief organizations", not refugees (through such organizations). This type of phrasing continues in the linked article, where Starbucks states that "the Starbucks Foundation will donate $20,000 to Aktion Deutschland Hilft, an alliance of respected aid organizations leading refugee support in Germany" (Starbucks, 2015). Within both fragments, the company utilizes the discursive device of suppression, which can be described as an

Figure 13

A screenshot of a tweet posted by McKinsey & Company [@McKinsey] on December 7, 2017.

intentional exclusion from the communicative act for a certain purpose 6/21/2023 8:05:00 PM. In the provided examples the people who are ultimately expected to benefit from the company's actions are excluded from the text. Instead, the text shines the spotlight on help providers – the company and the partners who are going to mediate their help. Clearly, the communication is aimed to benefit the company, while the help to forcibly displaced people is used as a trigger. Therefore, the people become less than reduced to their function of being forcibly displaced – they are objects enabling the company to exercise CSR. Interestingly, this shows, that not only technological companies

Similar invisibility is presented in Airbnb's and McKinsey & Company's tweets (Figure 12, 13). The visuals differ from the Starbucks' post as they correspond with the communicated topic. Yet, they comparably exclude images of forcibly displaced people in favor of the companies. The invisibility pertains, as well as the lack of acknowledgment of non-Northern perspectives. Another issue that such representations bring is the narrative control. With no counter-narratives or outsider perspectives, companies can easily shed a positive light on themselves, due to the simple fact of taking action. Supported by an informing strategy, the actions are centralized and often exaggerated. For example, in McKinsey & Company's tweet (2017, Figure 13) the company seems to extensively engage in helping forcibly displaced people. While this might be true, the actual impact is hard to verify and the actions are hard to assess, since the company is not specific about their actions, and communicates about them from a singular perspective. Hence, the company engages in reinforcing power inequalities by providing non-inclusive narratives, which embrace Northern perspectives only. Once more, the self-serving communication evinces philantrocapitalistic approach and backgrounds forcibly displaced people, who are introduced in communication as a context of CSR actions. This theme extends the knowledge of corporate discourses, by introducing another layer of negative consequences of representing people as beneficiaries, other than previously distinguished victimization.

4.2.3. Distinct Representations of Forcibly Displaced Ukrainians

The analysis revealed some differences in the representations of forcibly displaced Ukrainians as compared to other populations. The previous research on the communication of other stakeholders indicated similar tendencies (Zawadzka-Paluektau, 2023). While all posts from the dataset that communicated about this group represented them within the theme of *forcibly displaced people as receivers of help*, the provided portrayals could not be strictly

categorized into either of the previously discussed sub-themes. Rather, the representations of Ukrainians seem to uniquely merge both representation types. Moreover, the analysis has shown a distinctive tendency of companies to be remarkably specific about the nationality of forcibly displaced people while communicating about the Ukrainian emergency. This opposes most representations of forcibly displaced people from the Global South, about whom the companies are rarely as specific in these regards. Due to the aforementioned reasons, we decided to elaborate on the representations of forcibly displaced Ukrainians separately from others.

Most posts engaging in the topic directly mention the Ukrainians, while not always referring to them as refugees (Figure 14). On the surface, this may seem like an improvement compared to other populations of forcibly displaced people, who are often represented as a homogeneous mass (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008). However, the Ukrainian forcibly displaced people are also commonly generalized. In fact, none of the analyzed data units provided a representation of Ukrainians as specific individuals, meaning that the communications still take away any autonomy and voice by only mentioning forcibly displaced people from Ukraine as an anonymous collective.

The problem deepens, as many posts portray the group through numbers and statistics, which is visible in both Twitter posts (Figure 14, 15) as well as linked website content. For example, in one of the press releases shared by IKEA Foundation on Twitter, the company provides context to their CSR activities as follows: “The UN estimates that 12 million people

Figure 14

A screenshot of a tweet posted by McKinsey & Company [@McKinsey] on April 20, 2022.

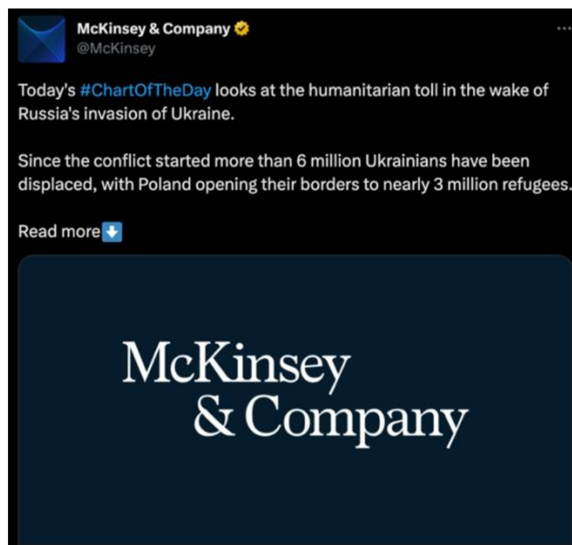
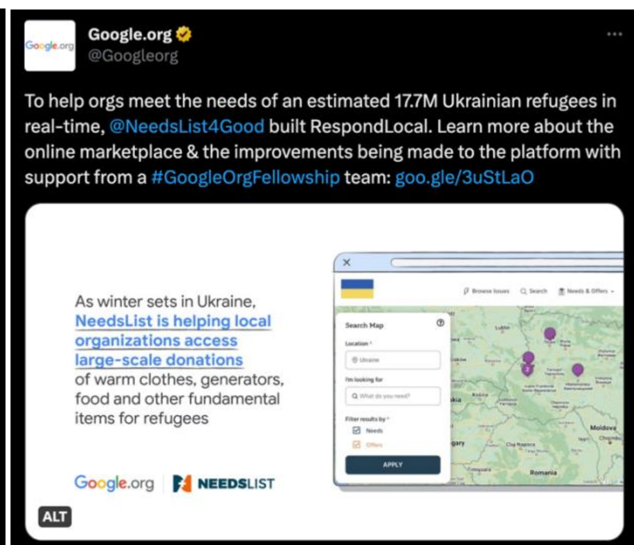


Figure 15

A screenshot of a tweet posted by Google [@Googleorg] on December 14, 2022.



inside Ukraine will need relief and protection, while more than 4 million refugees from Ukraine may need protection and assistance in neighboring countries in the coming months" (IKEA Foundation, 2022). While the numbers shock with the scale of conflict, and the usage of them might be aimed at encouraging action, they simultaneously resonate with negative discourses related to poor migration management in European countries, and the fear that large-scale migrations commonly evoke in Northern societies (Chouliaraki et al., 2017).

Moreover, generalized portrayals introduce problems as discussed in two other sub-themes of this section. Firstly, they contribute to the victimization of Ukrainians, who are shown as first and foremost forcibly displaced people and agency-lacking masses dependent on Northern help. The victimization discourse is strengthened with many posts building narrative on wording associated with vulnerability (e.g., protection, assistance), IKEA Foundation's linked press release being one of the examples (IKEA Foundation, 2022). A similar effect occurs when Ukrainians are directly referred to as "victims" (Figure 16), described as in a state of "threat to life and well-being" (IKEA Foundation, 2022), or presented as lacking fundamental items (Figure 15). Broadly used phrases of war or conflict (Figure 14, 16) also contribute to such positioning. Overall, forcibly displaced Ukrainians are victimized in a complex and diverse manner, which might lead to high social exposure to such narratives among Northern populations and ground them in social thought.

Figure 16

A screenshot of a tweet posted by IKEA [@IKEAFoundation] on March 2, 2022.

Another tendency identified in corporate communication about forcibly displaced Ukrainians is to mention them on merely the textual level but never on a visual one. None of the analyzed posts contained visual representations of Ukrainians – neither as groups nor individuals. The trend appears as corresponding with the sub-theme of *forcibly displaced people as objects of CSR*, with many posts confirming the correlation. For example, in Figure 16, the focus is placed on a large financial donation made by IKEA to UNHCR. Identically to the case of Starbucks' article discussed in the previous section, the communication foregrounds the company and partners mediating the company's help while excluding the images of beneficiaries Thus, the self-serving motivation appears as prevalent also in regards to the forcibly displaced people from Ukraine.

Looking at the above arguments, the corporate discourses on forcibly displaced Ukrainians oppose representations popular in communications of other stakeholders, where the Ukrainian refugees are usually portrayed in a more positive light, and more neutrally (Zawadzka-Paluektau, 2023). While some representations of other forcibly displaced populations have an empowering potential (section 4.1), they do not appear in regard to Ukrainian refugees. Perhaps because, as revealed within news media discourses, Ukrainian refugees, as Europeans, are by default treated as an in-group to Northern societies. Their European origin naturally positions them as less distant, closer, and easier to empathize with due to more evident similarities, such as skin color or general appearance (Heath & Richards, 2016; Zawadzka-Paluektau, 2023). For that reason, there might be less focus on showing them as 'similar to Northern populations' since they are assumed to belong. This paradoxically gives the opposite effect on representations, which are rather disempowering.

4.3. Forced Migration as a Crisis

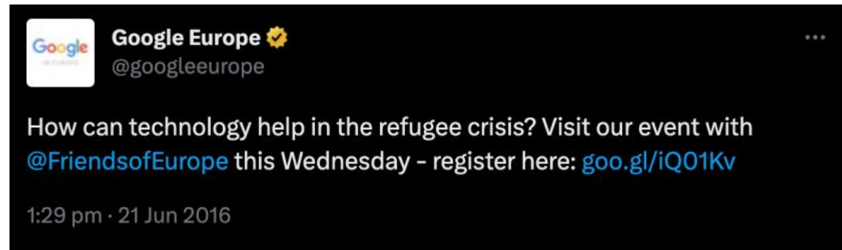
Similarly to the sub-theme of *forcibly displaced people as objects of CSR*, the next sub-theme, representing forced migration as a 'crisis', also embeds portrayals of refugees as invisible. Within this sub-theme forcibly displaced people are commonly visually underrepresented, and/or represented in a dehumanized manner. They are more often presented through the prism of an issue, rather than in a humanized way. This problem is especially prevalent in written communications of text-focused Twitter (Hodeghatta & Sahney, 2016). The textual character encourages such representations, as the necessity of filling in the visual space is lacking.

As identified in various posts, corporations tend use the blanket term ‘crisis’ to describe forced migration and related issues. Such phrasing deprives the forcibly displaced people of any voice and agency, as they become represented as a societal/humanitarian issue, rather than people. Moreover, by implementing the term ‘crisis’, corporations can benefit from its alarmist connotative meaning which brings associations of instability and danger (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2023; Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). If they can show that they are solving a ‘crisis’ it implies that they are having a major positive impact to their stakeholders. However, the negative connotations that may benefit the companies may also negatively impact the social attitudes toward forcibly displaced people. Implementing the term builds a narrative that forced migrants are dangerous to the host country or should be feared, which supports existing narratives and further alienates them in an already challenging situation (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Pannia, 2021). Therefore, representing forced migration as a crisis, companies often implement the discursive device of presupposition, that can support existing relationships of power. As described by Machin and Mayr (2012), presupposition appears when some meanings are assumed as given or known within the text, or through which the text producers strategically establish ‘the known’ to their benefit. Presupposition can simultaneously delegitimize opposing views, or allow to avoid being explicit about some aspects within communication that might be less beneficial when disclosed (Machin and Mayr, 2012). In this case, the corporations are relying on the unarticulated, connotative meaning of the word ‘crisis’ and the popularized understanding of ‘refugee crisis’ created within Northern societies by the discourses of other stakeholders (e.g., news media and politicians; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Pannia, 2021). The expression ‘refugee crisis’ emphasizes the Eurocentricity of the narratives, given that within the public debate it connotes European problems with the immigration and reception of refugees, rather than the displacement struggles as perceived by the refugees (Avraamidou, 2020). In that sense, the perspectives of the forcibly displaced people are being delegitimized, while the phrasing supports Northern superiority, and establishes the corporations as ‘saviors’ of the North from the negative impact of the crisis. Therefore, the overall impact of this is the entrenchment of unequal power relations, promotion of negative stereotypes, and loss of agency, which will be supported below using excerpts from corporate communications.

As has been exemplified within other themes, to highlight their CSR, corporations promote their involvement in aiding refugees. This has been visible throughout the dataset also in regards to this theme. Google, for example, posted a tweet communicating the company’s positive impact in the following manner: “How can technology help the refugee

Figure 17

A screenshot of a tweet posted by Google [@googleeurope] on June 21, 2016.



crisis? Visit our event …" (Google Europe, 2016, Figure 17) This statement is centered on Google, with a focus on their new technology and their event, corresponding with strategies of building the narrative typical for the technological sector (Haydon et al., 2021). The refugees are only mentioned in passing and seem to serve more as a method to attract interest and build rapport with the audience. This supports the previously mentioned lack of voice and agency for the refugees, with no mention of them beyond the blanket term of 'refugee crisis'. The phrase "help the refugee crisis" displays a focus on helping the refugee crisis instead of solving it or its causes, indicating self-serving motivation. Overall, the communication seems focused on benefiting Google, while hurting the perception of forcibly displaced people and reducing them to a crisis that needs to be addressed.

Airbnb issued a similar communication, stating that: "Airbnb is proud to answer the @WhiteHouse call-to-action on the global refugee crisis" (Airbnb, 2016; Figure 18). Similarly to Google's statement, Airbnb first focuses on promoting their interests, with a focus on their action and involvement with the White House. This is meant to create a positive impression on their stakeholders. The refugees are again only mentioned in passing and referred to using the phrase "global refugee crisis", which aside from strong negative connotations of the expression 'refugee crisis', brings attention to its global scale, which is another point of fear among Northern societies, due to prevalent insufficiency of migration management (Chouliaraki et al., 2017). This type of communication helps entrench existing power relationships and negatively impacts the perception of refugees and the ability to solve the root causes behind their forced migration.

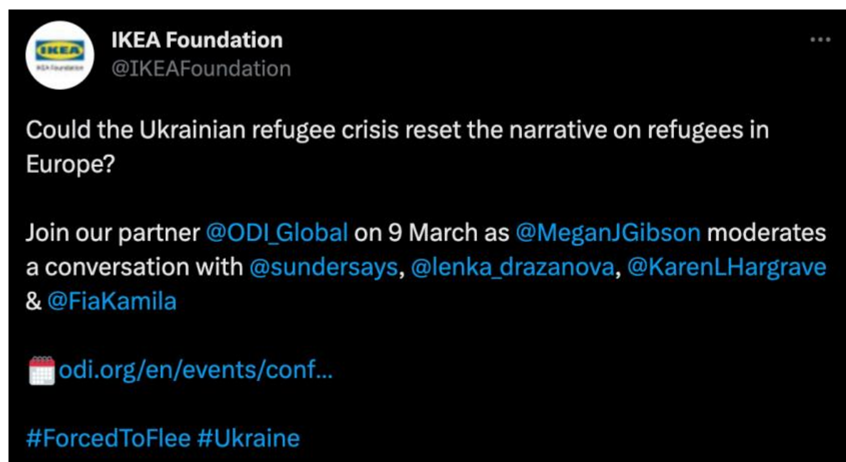
Such representational trends are also visible in regard to the Ukrainian emergency, showing that forced migration is similarly represented for the emergencies of both the Global South and the Global North. For example, IKEA issued the statement: "Could the Ukrainian refugee crisis reset the narrative on refugees in Europe?" (IKEA Foundation, 2022; Figure

Figure 18

A screenshot of a tweet posted by Airbnb [@Airbnb] on September 20, 2016.

Figure 19

A screenshot of a tweet posted by IKEA [@IKEAFoundation] on March 8, 2022.



19). Unlike the other communications, there is no focus on the positive impact that the company has had. However, the description of the Ukrainian emergency as a "refugee crisis" pigeonholes it in the same way that previously described examples pigeonhole emergencies from the Global South. Considering the negative connotation of the expression "refugee crisis", such phrasing creates an opposite effect. Specifically, it positions the Ukrainian emergency as similar to already negatively perceived others, instead of building the similarity towards the opposite direction. Furthermore, the phrase "reset the narrative on refugees" implies that there was already an existing, negative perception of refugees in Europe. This type of wording is likely to further entrench the negative sentiment. Hence, despite good intentions, the communication negatively impacts the perception of refugees and reduces them to a dangerous problem.

The three posts above all interact with the forced migration, but in all cases, it involves Northern people talking about what the North can do. They provide no voice to the people affected and beneficiaries remain invisible. This is due to the practice of referring to

them through the prism of crisis, which through its negative connotation labels the group as 'an issue'. This dehumanizes them in the self-serving communication that primarily aims to promote the positive impact that corporations are having. While, to the best of our knowledge, the discourse of crisis has not been earlier distinguished in corporate communication within the topic, the theme supports the argument that corporate humanitarianism is inherently embedded in the philantrocapitalist logic (Haydon et al., 2021). Further, it extends the understanding of ways through which this philantrocapitalist approach envisions in communications by showing its presence beyond the technological sector and in relation to technological products.

5. Conclusion

The study examined how companies represent forcibly displaced people and the related emergencies in their online communication to external stakeholders, based on Twitter, YouTube, and linked website communications of Google, McKinsey & Company, Starbucks, Airbnb, and IKEA. The analysis revealed heterogeneity of representations, related to primary motivations behind communication, the communicated CSR activity, the choice of a medium, and the populations of forcibly displaced people targeted with CSR actions. Acknowledging the industry and media-specific genre differences, we found more positive, and possibly empowering representations, as well as more negative ones that embrace existing, unequal relationships of power between the Global North and Global South. Simultaneously, the study found overlaps between representation types, especially between representations categorized under one theme.

The study contributes to the academic debate on corporate discourses about forcibly displaced people by confirming previous findings and bringing new insights about both positive and negative representations provided by the private sector. Firstly, we found that companies from all analyzed sectors often provide positive representations of forcibly displaced people as 'empowered' individuals by emphasizing the agency and similarity of forcibly displaced people, as well as showing their belonging to the Northern society. These findings somewhat correspond with previous research on corporate discourses. In line with Haydon et al., (2021) and Szkudlarek et al. (2021), the companies turned out to recognize the value that forcibly displaced people can bring to Northern society within the job setting. Similarly, the representations were situated within the context of employment and training; opposingly no evidence of entrepreneurial representations was found. The study did not reveal the recognition of gender-specific struggles either. Simultaneously, we discovered various representational trends, that extend the academic understanding of the private sector's discourses. Specifically, we found that the companies commonly represent forcibly displaced people as students, families, and friends of Northern society members, or heroes and fighters. While some of these representations match the discourses of other relevant stakeholders (e.g., Plambech et al., 2021), to the best of our knowledge they were not distinguished earlier in the corporate context. Altogether, these representations were generally found to re-work existing power relations to the benefit of the forcibly displaced.

Secondly, we discovered similarities between the discourses of the private sector and other relevant stakeholders. This indicates that discourses of one industry are likely to

transfer to the communication of others, especially when the industries work closely with each other, like corporate and humanitarian. Specifically, we found that companies commonly represent forcibly displaced people as agency-lacking victims (Chouliaraki 2012; Johnson, 2011; Ongenaert et al., 2023; Pannia, 2021), including the stereotypical and disempowering images of suffering mothers and children (Johnson, 2011; Plambech et al., 2021). Such representations often appear when the company's self-interest is prioritized over the social motivation behind CSR, establishing the position of forcibly displaced people as subordinate to Northern self-interests.

Additionally, we found that in often cases the North-/self-centric focus of corporate communication leads to disempowering representations of forcibly displaced people as objects of CSR, or forced migration as a crisis. Despite lower popularity, such representations appear troubling due to how they ground negative approaches to forced migration as dangerous and problematic to Northern societies, that flourish within news media discourses (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Greussing & Boomgaarden, 2017), and should be challenged rather than reinforced.

Interestingly, in contrast to the findings of the previous research on discourses about forcibly displaced Ukrainians (Zawadzka-Paluektau, 2023), our study revealed that Ukrainian people are portrayed similarly to the forcibly displaced people from the Global South. The representations of Ukrainians discovered commonly merged the trend of representing forcibly displaced people as victims and as objects of CSR and often prioritized communicating CSR over the people in need. Considering that the topic of discourses on forcibly displaced Ukrainians was mainly covered in regard to news media until now, our study brings more industry nuance by exceeding the understanding of representational trends to the private sector.

Moreover, the types of representations foregrounding companies over forcibly displaced people that our research identified, resonate with previous studies on CSR more broadly, and confirm the prevalence and situatedness of corporate humanitarians within the philantrocapitalistic logic (Haydon et al., 2021; Henriksen & Richey, 2022). Among them, especially prominent was Google's focus on promoting their products, showing the technological sector continuously approaches humanitarian emergencies as technological challenges (Haydon et al., 2021; Henriksen & Richey, 2022). Nonetheless, the self-serving type of communication emerged across all analyzed sectors, proving that other sectors also extensively focus on benefitting from social action, often at the cost of negative representations of people in need.

Overall, the research reveals that while the analyzed companies aim to bring a positive impact to the social and humanitarian spheres and improve the life and well-being of forcibly displaced people, their communication strategies in many cases contradict their actions by representing forcibly displaced people in a disempowering manner. Even though positive representations are present across the sectors, their empowering potential is diminished by representational inconsistency, as more positive and more negative representations are provided interchangeably. This indicates that while indeed the boundaries of for-profit and non-profit increasingly blur (Du et al., 2010; Henriksen & Richey, 2022; Richey et al., 2021), the companies struggle with communicating CSR in a way that would benefit both them and the subjects of their CSR. Further, this confirms the relatedness of the (self-/society-serving) motivation behind communication, and the impact on discourse (Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021; Du et al., 2010).

To bring media genre-specific nuance, our study revealed that text-based Twitter encourages less personalized, dehumanized, invisible representations. Opposingly, visually-focused YouTube was more often found to provide positive, empowering representations. From the practical policy-oriented perspective, that should bring attention of the companies, that aim to bring truly positive impact, to create CSR content more consciously of genre specificities and common representational issues. Moreover, the companies should create communicational content with higher awareness of the empowering potential that lies in the strategies of representation themselves, that for now seem to disrupt the companies' positive impact, rather than boost it.

The limitations of this study include the researcher's positionality as an outsider to the minority about whom the discourses have been studied. While different means of improving reliability and validity have been implemented (e.g., reflexivity, extensive and sensitizing literature review), future studies could benefit from gaining the perspectives of in-group researchers. That would help to de-centralize academic knowledge production from the Global North and bring more balanced modes to the global system of knowledge production (Kloß, 2017).

Another limitation regards the choice of a relatively broad time frame for sampling. While we consider this time frame relevant and important in the light of forced migration emergencies, it must be noted that some linked content has been archived, and could not be accessed. Therefore, in some cases, a more detailed analysis was not possible, which could influence the understanding of representations provided by the companies.

Moreover, the study analyzed two out of many social media platforms that companies implement for CSR communication. While their popularity and interconnectedness established them as suitable for the research, the study could be extended by looking into other (social) media genres, possibly analyzing more recent content, and/or focusing on some populations of forcibly displaced people more specifically.

To extend the academic knowledge provided by this research, future studies could scrutinize discourses of other sectors, or dive deeper into discourses of one particular sector, to establish significant, sector-specific similarities and differences. That could later benefit these sectors by indicating strategies of how to inclusively communicate about certain products or services that help improve the well-being of forcibly displaced people, in a way that both benefits the companies and empowers the people.

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Appendix A: List of analyzed data

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Appendix B: Code lists

Theme	Sub-Theme	Open Codes
Forcibly Displaced People as Empowered Individuals	Forcibly Displaced People as Families and Friends	Forcibly Displaced People as moms, dads, families Forcibly Displaced People as friends of people from the Global North Forcibly Displaced people as neighbors In relationship with host country residents Personal stories related to family and friendship matters
	Forcibly Displaced People as Employees and Students	Forcibly Displaced People as employees Forcibly Displaced People as students Hard-working, talented, skillful Benefits of workforce integration Personal stories related to work and education matters
	Forcibly Displaced People as Heroes and Fighters	Better life as motivation behind migration Family safety as motivation behind migration Forcibly Displaced People as having agency over their lives, in control Motivation and determination Mentally strong and resilient Hopefulness Hero images: courage, savers of their families Rational decision-making Strategic and survival skills Overcoming the struggles of war/migration/integration

		Personal stories related to displacement, war, conflict
Forcibly Displaced People as receivers of help	Forcibly Displaced People as Victims	Forcibly Displaced People as vulnerable and suffering Agency-lacking Distant and hard to relate Evoking empathy The role of forcibly displaced people reduced to being refugees Limited personalization Images of mothers and children
	Forcibly Displaced People as Objects of CSR	Dependent on Northern helpers Background to company actions, products, innovations Companies as main characters Communicating CSR as the key aim of communication Underrepresentation of forcibly displaced people
	Distinct Representations of Forcibly Displaced Ukrainians	Support for Ukraine Explicit use of 'Ukraine', or 'Ukrainian', or 'Ukrainians'
Forced Migration as a Crisis		Crisis as technological challenge Explicit use of the term 'refugee crisis' Invisibility of forcibly displaced people