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*Passionate speakers or un-emotional gentlemen?*

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# Emotions in European parliamentary debates: Passionate speakers or un-emotional gentlemen?

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## Abstract

This article analyses the verbal display and role of emotions in the European Parliament (EP). Contributing both to European Studies and Parliamentary studies, this article shows how emotions are expressed and how they reflect power and status dynamics. Emotions are indeed used differently depending on the power position of Members of the EP (MEPs). This article also reveals that emotions may play a role in crisis situations by constraining the choices and policy solutions under consideration. This qualitative study compares parliamentary debates on two of the most relevant recent crises before 2020: the refugee crisis (2014–2017) and the economic crisis (2009–2014). Empirical evidence is drawn from the systematic in-depth content analysis of 25 EP debates.

**Keywords** Emotions · European Politics · European Parliament · Refugee crisis · Economic crisis

## Introduction

The European Union (EU) has been facing in the last years increasing legitimacy challenges. The credibility and legitimacy of EU institutions and policies have been eroded in the wake of failed referendums, poor crisis management and the Brexit. The challenges the EU is facing are complex and diverse, but at least they all have at least one dimension in common: their increasing emotional intensity.

The role of emotions in European politics has not been fully investigated. When analysed, emotions are attributed to political masses (Barbalet 2006). EU decision-makers, especially Commission officials, are usually pictured as rational and technocratic individuals. In addition, the opposition between reason and emotion is still prevalent in the study of European politics. This assumption has been challenged by

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many scholars in a variety of disciplines affirming that emotions are part of rationality itself (McDermott 2004). The usual pressure to lay aside emotions to reach objectivity hinders awareness of emotions and prevents individuals from developing deliberate emotion management strategies (Bergman Blix and Wettergren 2016).

While there is not a generally accepted definition or typology of emotions, a few authors agree that emotions are composed by several elements including: activation of key body systems, appraisal of situational stimuli, overt or inhibited expression, and socially constructed labels and rules (Demertzis 2013). In social sciences, emotions are usually conceived as cognitive judgments, but it is important to recall that the specificity of emotions (as compared to values or ideas) is that they constitute primed response structures that intervene automatically during the process of adaptation (Popa and Salanță 2013).

The purpose of this article is to modestly contribute to the understanding of the role of emotions in European policy-making through a systematic analysis of the verbal display and potential role of emotions in the European Parliament (EP). The attention is placed on how emotions are verbally expressed by Members of the EP (MEPs) and other key-players participating in EU parliamentary debates, namely the Commission. The analysis shows to which extent MEPs display and use different emotions depending on their power position and status. It also discusses to which extent the prevalence of specific emotions may have contributed to reducing the choices available and thus, may have had an impact on policy discussions and policy choices.

The study of emotion dynamics is relevant for several reasons. First, the study of emotions can be used to read-back the power status relationships that gave rise to them (Kemper 2001). Emotions not only can serve to acquire knowledge about the world, they can also exercise power in specific social contexts and groups (Koschut 2018). If MEPs alter their spontaneous display of feelings to meet normative requirements, this could mean that they are sustaining the current social order, and that they are contributing to reproduce status inequalities (Thoits 2004; Eksner, 2015). The mainstream group would tend to value certain kinds of emotions expressed in certain ways and to denigrate, suspect or avoid expressions that do not fit those parameters.

The first section of this article briefly introduces existing literature on emotions in European politics and in Parliamentary studies. Secondly, the attention is turned to the introduction of the analytical framework, methodology and data analysis. In the empirical part, this article shows how emotions are verbally displayed in parliamentary debates, and discusses their potential role in circumscribing policy choices.

## Emotions in European Parliament debates

The present analysis constitutes an original contribution to studies on European politics and Parliamentary studies, since studies on the role of emotions in both fields of inquiry are rare.



## **Emotions in EU politics: focus on citizens' consent and social conformity**

There has been little engagement between European studies and political psychology (Manners 2014), especially when it comes to the role of feelings and emotions. An exception is the noticeable attention directed towards European efforts to create EU citizen's emotional attachment and identity. Following the neo-functionalist theory of European integration, the peoples of Europe were expected to develop a we-feeling in the wake of European economic integration (Haas 1968). A few studies from different perspectives have been dedicated to explore these assumptions, analysing the consequences of transnational interactions or transnational attachment (Deutschmann et al. 2018; Kuhn 2015). The emphasis has also been placed on the feelings of citizens towards political elites and political institutions and policies (Nielsen and Capelos 2018; Barbalet 2006). Emotions in the EU context have for example covered the study of EU support and EU referendums (Easton 2009; De Vreese and Boomgaarden 2005; Garry 2014 Verbalys and von Scheve 2018) and the enlargement process (Besir and Sojka 2016).

In brief, up until now European studies have only seen emotions as a means to explain citizen's consent and social conformity (or their absence). The focus on emotional dynamics among EU policy-makers and elites is almost non-existent (Barbalet 2006). Roald and Sangolt (2012) have used textual emotional indexes to measure the frequency of emotional triggers in EP debates on climate change. More recently, the database EUSpeech including speeches from EU elites from 2007 to 2015 allows for the development of new studies on the topic of emotions, using, for example, automated sentiment analysis (Schumacher et al. 2016). Existing preliminary research has concluded that EU institutions, including the EP communicate with less sentiment than member state's prime ministers. My focus on one single institution—the European Parliament—and the choice of an in-deep analysis allows going beyond this general conclusion and better understanding the display and role of emotions.

## **Emotions in Parliamentary studies: focus on rational deliberation**

Mainstream studies on Parliaments focus on questions such as institutional matters, voting patterns and dynamics of representation and deliberation. It is commonly assumed that legal rules, deliberation and decisions are the result of higher cognitive processes capable of containing emotions (Sajó 2016; Bergman Blix and Wettergren 2016). It is thus not surprising that there are no studies on the role of emotions in Parliament in major journals on parliamentary studies.<sup>1</sup> A few articles discuss specific emotions indirectly, while focusing on topics related to high emotional intensity, such as the Brexit or the fight against terrorism. For example, a framing analysis of UK parliamentary discourses argues that British political elites have shown a

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<sup>1</sup> The journals *Parliamentary Affairs* and *The Journal of Legislative Studies* have been screened from 2005 to 2017 and not single study on emotions was found.



trend towards the securitization of migration and asylum since the 9/11 (Huysmans and Buonfino 2008: 767). While the role of emotions is not discussed explicitly, this analysis of the politics of exception and the politics of unease shows that changes in policy framing are shaped by fear, which seems to play a constitutive role in dynamics of policy justification.

As is the case with Parliamentary studies, research on the EP has mainly focused on its main features from an institutional approach, its internal organization, activities, elections and its interactions with external actors (Costa 2019). There has also been some interest in MEPs representational roles, socio-economic profiles and processes of socialization. Studies on affective dynamics are very rare, with the exception of Roald and Sangolt (2012).

Emotions are usually not considered—more generally—to be appropriate elements of deliberation (Hall 2007, Bickford 2011). Scholars usually assume that deliberation requires the exercise of rationality precluding the development of knowledge of the role of emotions in discourse. The ideal of commitment to the force of the better argument, while understandable, neglects the reality of actual dynamics of deliberation. Emotional displays are indeed common in discursive practices and in deliberation (Fischer 2009; Bickford 2011). The use of emotions in rhetoric is usually regarded as aiming to manipulate, but a few scholars also consider that it can enhance cognitive engagement and deliberation (Barnes 2008). More importantly, emotions are not really separable from reason or rationality, and in dynamics of deliberation, they are needed in the process of sorting through options and making judgments (Hall 2007).

The role of emotions in deliberation has been studied in the field of critical social policy studies. It is argued that deliberative fora for citizen's participation depend on deep subjective dynamics, and that effective community deliberation and collaboration need to overcome emotional barriers that require political-psychological attention (Fischer 2009). While emotions are relevant in deliberation, public officials find emotions difficult to handle in the context of deliberation directed at issues of policy or service delivery (Barnes 2008).

## Studying emotions in the European Parliament

This article focuses on the EP as an institutional setting where dynamics of power and status are of utmost importance. Power and status have been conceptualized as structures that can give rise to emotions (Kemper 2001). According to this view, MEPs and other key-players would learn the behavioural expectations attached to their role-identity and would be motivated to meet these expectations to gain approval or rewards (Thoits 2004). To explore this question, I will first focus on how emotions are displayed by MEPs and other key-players in the EP, namely the Commission, arguing that the display and use of emotions depends on their status or power position. I will also discuss how the prevalence of certain emotions (or configurations of emotions) in EP debates may have shaped policy discussions and even policy outcomes.



The extent to which emotions are permitted in an institution organized under a so-called cult of rationality depends on specific techniques of social control (Sajó 2010). Some forms of emotional display are accepted while others are sanctioned. In the public domain, only the display of emotions related to individual moral judgments is considered to be appropriate. In this way ‘feeling the right emotion about a public matter becomes a matter of being morally right (Sajó 2010: 363)’. Shame and embarrassment are used as means of social control since they lead to loss of status and dishonour, sustaining political correctness (Sajó 2011). Thus, I expect that the average MEP tends to reinforce honour and status by using emotions that are considered to be appropriate, such as trust, commitment and pride (Barbalet 2002).

I also expect that emotions vary depending on the type of speaker since emotional expectations and skills would be distributed differently by social status (Thoits 2004). The main variation is expected between policy makers supporting the status quo and counter-politicians or challengers supporting policy change (Table 1). Traditional politicians are expected to adopt a set of rigid and fixed rules on manners typical of the worthy gentleman (Wouters 2012). In sharp contrast, counter-politicians are expected to present themselves in a very different manner, including the use of emotion strategies as a tool for social change or resistance. Counter-politicians would tend to use emotion words and grammar, as well as symbols that evoke broad categories of meaning accompanied by strong emotions (condensational symbols) (Bennett 2016). As may be expected, ideologies and identity also play a key role and thus, I expect that different counter-politicians engage in different emotion-based strategies. Left-wing counter-politicians would tend to engage in blaming and shaming, which consists of appealing to guilt or shame to generate a desired action (Kapyła and Kennedy 2014). Right-wing populists would also appeal to emotions because they aim at plucking the heart strings of the common people (Wouters 2012). More specifically, right-wing populist are expected to engage in fear mongering, a technique aiming at spreading fear through narrative techniques to normalize errors in reasoning, for example through repetition, through the presentation of isolated occurrences as trends and through misdirection (Glassner 2004).

Differences are also to be expected within the group of mainstream key-players, namely between EU officials and administrators and regular MEPs. Following existing research, I expect that policy administrators engage in cognitive work to ensure emotional detachment (Thoits 2004). Policy officers and administrators tend to cover the social and human implications of certain policies (as well as the urgency to find appropriate solutions) by adopting an obscure and technical language, by reframing a situation to elicit the proper emotional states and by using what is called referential symbols, which are symbols that convey very narrow meaning and tend to conceal feelings (Bennett 2016). Using impartial, objective and rational language can also be considered as an emotional strategy to appear more convincing (Palm 2018). The general idea is that if the audience would put aside their emotions and would let their reason prevail they would agree that the proposals made by elites make sense and are fair (Bickford 2011). This strategy is particularly expected in the Commission. Institutions deprived of direct representation such as the Commission base their legitimacy in their capacity to operate rationally, hence efficiently (Sajó 2006).



**Table 1** Emotions verbal expression and role in parliamentary debates

Key-players	Emotion strategy	Policy change in EP
Public officials	Un-emotional language	Proposes status quo or policy change
Mainstream MEPs	Emotions in framing	Supports status quo
Mainstream MEPs	Emotions in framing and strategies	Challenges status quo
Extreme left MEPs	Emotions in framing and strategies	E.g. Blaming-shaming Challenges status quo
Extreme-right MEPs	Emotions in framing and strategies	E.g. Fearmongering Challenges status quo

Elaborated by the author

The insulation of institutions such as the Commission from emotionally loaded public opinion is often considered as beneficial.

If they are not following a detachment strategy, MEPs are expected to use emotions explicitly in framing processes. Existing research on framing and emotions focuses on how frames (conceived as stimuli) trigger emotions in individuals while little attention is given to emotions' constitutive role. Emotions are not only a reaction to a cognitive stimuli (thought-dependent), they can also motivate cognition and give rise to thoughts and inferences (thought-directing) (Minner 2015). In this sense, emotions have a constitutive or normative function, and can be conceived as programmatic (Barbalet 2006). Programmatic emotions give direction to life and as such, they contribute to the shaping of policy preferences, identities and values and are an important element within framing processes, including policy solutions.

While public officials and mainstream MEPs are expected to stick to the generally accepted emotions, challengers of the status quo and counter-politicians are expected to create emotional stimulus to seek specific reactions and use emotions that do not necessarily fit with the parameters usually accepted by the concept of rational deliberation. Challengers would be the only ones employing relational emotions in their discourses. Relational emotions (thought-dependent) refer to emotional experiences arising in persons as a result to their relationships with others or to external and internal stimuli.

Emotion-based strategies can be interpreted as conscious attempts to manipulate other's reactions, but also as efforts to adapt in a positive way to the current political environment or power structure.

Analysing power and status dynamics will serve first to identify which voices are encouraged and which voices are excluded in the EP. The systematic (self-imposed) suppression of particular emotions or emotion-based strategies would prevent certain emotions and those that hold them from playing a role in politics (Bickford 2011).

In the EP, I expect that policy outcomes are not directly affected by emotion-based strategies when they are only expressed by counter-politicians since the EP mostly decides with large majorities. However the exclusion of certain voices and the neglect of specific emotions by the majority of EP would have consequences for policy outcomes. Emotions have indeed been considered as forms of action



readiness (readiness to achieve particular aims) (Frijda 2007). Emotional expressions can thus be used to enable or constrain particular policy proposals and policy solutions (Palm 2018). Some examples of emotions that are considered to affect constitutional solutions (understood in a broad sense) are fear and compassion (Sajó 2006). For example, fear would help to overcome collective and individual resistance to certain policy solutions. In sharp contrast, emotions such as disgust and compassion would make fundamental rights hard to deny.

## Research design, data and methods

While automated sentiment analysis and quantitative emotional indexes serve to identify general patterns in the expression of emotions in political communication (Roald and Sangolt 2012; Schumacher et al. 2016), qualitative analysis can provide an in-depth examination of power and status dynamics. Taking into account that analysing the how and why of emotions is particularly complex, I opted for observing explicit emotion keywords present in discourses (Flam 2015; Palm 2018). The study of discourses is of utmost importance since discourses are means for exercising power. Building on Foucault and Laclau's work, Koschut (2018) argues that this exercise of power would not be possible without an affective component.

Given the distance between MEPs and their constituencies, the intercultural character of the EP and the general lack of genuine interaction, I expect emotions to play a less visible role in the EP than in other legislatures (Roald and Sangolt 2012). Existing research concludes that the EP is characterized by high levels of respect and by little personal or partisan attacks on other participants (Lord 2013).

MEPs also tend to place the emphasis on technical negotiations to the detriment of politization (Roger et al. 2017). To increase the chances of identifying emotions, I selected two topics in which emotions were expected to play a relevant role: EU parliamentary debates on the topic of migration in the context of the refugee crisis (2014–2017) and debates on the responses to and the effects of the economic and financial crisis (2009–2014). These two crises were chosen because they are often considered as the two most challenging crises that the EU has faced before 2020. In such critical junctures, the EP was motivated to reach a common position to strengthen its stand in the negotiations with the Council (Roger et al. 2017). While both topics have led to intense policy debates and discussions, they differ in many other dimensions. Economic integration, and especially the monetary Union is one of core EU policies where member states have delegated substantial competences to the EU level. The delegation of competences in the domain of refugee and asylum protection is however less developed. It is also important to consider that since 2014, anti-EU factions are more present in the EP (Wassenberg 2019) which may have had an impact on the affective content of the debates after this date. The analysis of two different topics serves to determine to which extent the power/status configurations develop differently in different critical situations. If general trends are identified they may also apply to other crisis situations but in any case, more research would be needed to determine to which extent the findings of this article can be relevant to other policy areas. For a more complete view, further research



**Table 2** Data analysed

Topic	Debates	Words	Speakers	Languages
Refugee crisis (2014–2017)	14	232.083	992	EU official languages
Economic crisis (2009–2014)	11	152.247	465	English

could also investigate the role of emotions at committee levels and during informal negotiation processes.

For an emotion discourse analysis, the first step consists on selecting appropriate texts (Table 2). The EU plenary debates analysed are available online and were selected using keywords in the search function on the EP website (see “[Appendix 3](#)”). Fourteen debates on the refugee crisis cover relevant topics related to EU migration policies such as the European Agenda on Migration (including the controversial relocation system), the Central Mediterranean routes, the migration compacts, the situation of children and some of the latest tragedies in the Mediterranean. Eleven debates on the EU response within the context of the economic and financial crisis discuss the main measures to combat the EU economic crisis, and the effects of the economic crisis on employment, world trade and development. It is also worth considering that the speaking time for representatives from EU institutions, from rapporteurs and from key players (depending on the procedure) are considerably longer than the speaking time given to other MEPs. This article includes a full analysis of all texts in English, and for the refugee crisis debates in which the transcription of the simultaneous translation was not available, also French, Dutch and Spanish.<sup>2</sup> While the absence of transcription of EP debates since 2012 can be considered as a limitation, it also served as an opportunity to show how emotions are expressed in different languages.

The following steps of the emotion discourse analysis consist on mapping the emotion keywords and on contextualizing their political effects (Palm 2018). A first descriptive mapping was aimed at identifying how MEPs and other key-players explicitly used emotion keywords in the plenary debates. Given the difficulty to define emotions (and to avoid different interpretations during the coding process) the automatic coding only included emotion keywords corresponding to basic primary and secondary emotions.<sup>3</sup> Although the mapping is a necessary step, this qualitative analysis was not so much concerned with identifying frequencies of specific

<sup>2</sup> The languages chosen cover a great variety of political positions and sensibilities, including interventions by relevant right-wing populist parties such as the Front National (France), the Partij Voor de Vrijheid (Netherlands) and the UK Independence Party (UK); as well as the left-wing *Podemos* (Spain) and possibly the *Socialistische partij* (Netherlands). For the in-depth analysis I also read additional interventions, particularly by Central and Eastern EU MEP using automatic translators.

<sup>3</sup> The emotion keywords were based on one of the most used classifications (Parrot 2001). The only exception is trust, which is a controversial emotion not included in this list, but usually included as an emotions by typologies in sociology and political sciences. The manual and automatic coding only included objective categories such as political party, gender and emotion word. Since there was not really room for subjective interpretation, there is no need of inter-coder reliability tests.



emotion markers, but rather with the analysis of emotional patterns and structures. These emotional patterns and structures were identified following an in-depth reading of all the debates, in which all emotion makers were considered within their discursive context. The purpose of the Atlas.ti analysis was thus to pave the way to the in-depth *qualitative* analysis done mainly through a careful reading and interpretation of the debates following theoretical assumptions. While the Atlas.ti analysis only took into account emotion keywords, the in-depth contextual analysis took into account all types of implicit and explicit references to emotions.

## **Emotions in EU parliamentary debates: passionate public speakers or unemotional gentlemen?**

This section presents first the emotions verbally displayed at the EP and proceeds then to focus on the use of emotions by key-players with different power and status. As expected, Commission officials limited their use of emotion keywords while MEPs explicitly used emotion Keywords in framing and argumentation. Emotion-based discursive strategies were not only used by counter-politicians as expected, but also by the mainstream MEPs that adopted a position of challengers of the status quo. The analysis also explains how the prevalence of certain configurations of emotions may have constrained policy choices and policy solutions.

### **The prevalence of positive sentiments**

My analysis confirms the results of preliminary automated sentiment analysis in the sense that positive sentiments such as hope and trust were more displayed than negative sentiments (Schumacher et al. 2016). The in-depth analysis showed however that one should be cautious. A few positive emotions such as hope were often used in a purely linguistic way. Also, it was not so easy to determine to which extent emotions should be qualified as positive or negative, both at a superficial level (sometimes emotion keywords as fear were used to say: we should look at the future without fear) and at a deeper level (who says fear is negative?) (See also Roald and Sangolt 2012).

The most frequent emotion in political debates was trust. While there is an ongoing discussion regarding the status of trust as an emotion, trust is frequently conceptualized as a relevant emotion by political scientists (Thompson and Hoggett 2012; Barbalet 2002). Trust is considered to be essential to grant law-abiding behaviour, participation in civic activities and governmental legitimacy (Marozzi 2015). The trustworthiness of public figures and institutions is becoming increasingly crucial and thus, one would expect that key-players present themselves as trustworthy (Pelsmaekers et al. 2014). When it comes to debates on the refugee crisis, trust referred to two distinct types of relevant feelings: the trust of EU citizens towards EU institutions, and trust towards third countries such as Turkey and African countries in the way they are dealing (or they may deal) with migrants. While the word trust did not seem to appear much in debates on the economic crisis, in this policy



area the word confidence—related to trust—was frequently used (68 occurrences in total). In debates on the economic crisis, trust/confidence<sup>4</sup> was also employed regarding a diversity of actors: the EU and EU member states, markets and investors and EU citizens. Emotions such as suffering, desperation and fear were also explicitly present in the debates, but only referring to EU citizens, migrants or markets. Thus, negative emotions seem to be used mainly when they refer to the objects of policy-making.

It is interesting to highlight that the use of emotion markers depended on the language. What was considered good manners regarding the expression of emotions depended indeed on different political cultures. For example, in Spanish or Dutch it is unusual to use the word fear. Anger and indignation were surprisingly absent in all languages under analysis with the remarkable exception of French, in which the words *colère* and *indignation* were used. More examples on how emotions are expressed differently in different languages are given in the following sections (see Table 8).

It is also worth mentioning that MEPs also used emotion expressions without using explicit emotion markers, including images, such as the Mediterranean pictured as a graveyard or metaphors, such as the myth of Sisyphus, or Prometheus. A few MEPs even shared their own personal emotion-loaded experiences. This is evidently not reflected in the Atlas.ti analysis of word markers, but has been carefully considered in the in-depth contextual analysis.

### When emotions are absent: emotional detachment

After an in-depth examination of the interventions by Commission officials in the EP, it appears that—as expected—the language used was mostly technical, including figures and details on funding and implementation. This is also partially reflected in the Atlas.ti analysis: Commission officials at the EP tend to use emotion markers in linguistic constructions (I fear, I trust, I regret, I hope, etc.) rather than expressing emotions. Commission officials also tended to avoid negative emotions in their discourses (with the only exception of citizen's suffering). The Commission could thus be using emotional detachment to increase its power position and legitimacy in the discussions (Sanchez Salgado 2018).

The emotion markers the most used by the Commission, trust and pride, were positive and seem congruent with an emotional detachment strategy. Commission officials did not usually display self-emotions, but they did so in exceptional cases, such as when there was a strong disagreement with the Council. For example, on the topic of the refugee crisis, Commissioner Avramopoulos expressed his disappointment and frustration about the position of the Council: 'To finish, I will not hide from you that I felt disappointed and frustrated on Monday evening, even though progress was made. It was not enough: it is nothing compared to the magnitude of

<sup>4</sup> While some authors make a distinction between confidence and trust, this distinction does not seem applicable to this study since it is considered that trust presupposes a situation of risk which is not the case of confidence (Pelsmaekers et al. 2014).



the crisis.’ It could be argued that Commission officials may be more inclined to use emotions when they challenge status-quo players in the Council. Variation seems also to be explained by individual profiles. For example, speakers such as President Juncker and Commissioner Timmermans have a much more political profile than other EU officials and—as general rule—their speeches sounded less technocratic.

The emotional detachment strategy used by the Commission was contested by challengers. The Commission was indeed accused of depersonalizing and dehumanizing policy issues and in this way, of ignoring the needs of European citizens and more generally, the human community (see box).

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#### Examples of dynamics of depersonalization

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This is not about changing empty bottles for full bottles. This is about men that look for a safe place. *Judith Sargentini, Greens/ALE, 8-3-2016, Translated from Dutch*

There are a lot of things we can do, and we should never forget that we are talking about people that are in need of protection—not problems, not numbers, but people. *Ska Keller, Greens/ALE, 12-04-2016*

It is a new proof that [the European Union] is a technocratic oligarchy laughing in the face of the European peoples, their identity and their aspirations. *Gilles Lebreton, ENF, 12-04-2016 translated from French*

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It is important to highlight that even if Commission officials used a technical discourse to increase its credibility and legitimacy, this does not mean that they were deprived of emotions or that their policies or arguments were not implicitly based on emotions. Emotions could be deducted from behaviour/actions and from the perceptions of other MEPs. A few MEPs (mainly challengers) saw the Commission as a desperate actor proposing a great number of policy measures that did not bring any real change or long-term solution to problems.

### How MEPs use emotions in framing dynamics

The in-depth analysis showed that MEP not only used emotions in linguistic expressions during debates on these two crises. Emotions seem to have played an explicit programmatic role in framing processes from different political groups.<sup>5</sup>

In the domain of the economic crisis, the emotion that played the most relevant constitutive role for most political parties was fear. While MEPs from different political ideologies have different values and opinions, the fact that fear is the most prominent emotion for everyone can impact on policy outcomes through the reduction of the set of policy solutions. On the basis of fear, public policy would be geared towards neutralizing danger (Frijda 2007). Fear also tends to picture negative events such as crisis as unpredictable and little emphasis is placed on individual control or responsibility (Lerner et al. 2015).

References to threatening scenarios were employed by all political parties to support their political diagnosis and solutions. As may be expected, different political

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<sup>5</sup> These results are less visible quantitatively on the refugee crisis debates (Table 6 “Appendix 1”), which is due to the fact that most MEPs from the political parties under analysis spoke in their native languages and there was no English translation available.



parties feared different things and thus, they had different interpretations on how the danger should be neutralized. The majoritarian political parties: European People's Party (EPP) and the Party of European Socialists (S&D) seemed to fear the most the collapse of the EU and of the euro. In addition to the fears expressed by other parties, S&D also expressed fear for budget cuts, for the situation of trade unions and for the welfare state. Populist & Eurosceptic political parties expressed a very different type of fear: fear for the quality of democracy and for the rise of public disorder in EU member states (see box). Fear led thus to very different types of neutralization of danger depending on how MEPs defined the situation. For mainstream political parties austerity and/or further political integration would help the EU to be protected from the crisis. For extreme right-wing political parties the danger came from the EU and the euro, and thus, the solution consisted on leaving the EU.

It is significant that only a minority of left-wing political parties expressed indignation and anger (see box). Anger tends to produce perceptions of negative events as predictable and under human control (Lerner et al. 2015), gearing towards punishment of perpetrators and further regulation (Minner 2015). Anger was however present when debates discussed the topic of speculators and large companies abusing the system. The fact that anger seems to be a less accepted emotion in this policy issue may have had specific consequences in terms of constraining certain policy solutions geared towards punishment and regulation.

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#### Fear and anger in debates on economic crisis

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The middle way, which most countries always seem to choose and which involves a partial commitment and a yes-and-no, wait-and-see approach, will bring the euro to the point of collapse.

*Martin Schulz, S&D, 14/09/2011*

If the euro collapses, then confidence in the European project will collapse along with it. *Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid, PPE, 14/09/2011*

You have killed democracy in Greece. You have three part-time overseas dictators that now tell the Greek people what they can and cannot do. It is totally unacceptable. Is it any wonder that Greek people are now burning EU flags and drawing swastikas across them? Frankly, unless Greece is allowed to get out of this economic and political prison you may well spark a revolution in that country. *Nigel Farage, EFD, 14/09/2011*

We are therefore expressing our most strident protest and indignation at these antisocial policies, which systematically ignore the public and are indifferent to the exacerbation of divergence, inequality, unemployment, poverty and social exclusion that they are creating (...) EU leaders are even being seen to publicly humiliate the member states and their peoples, who are suffering severely from the consequences of neoliberal and antisocial courses. *Ilda Figueiredo, GUE/NGL, PT, 14-09-2011*

Madam President, Commissioner, through you, my anger is directed at the entire Commission and at the Heads of State or Government in Europe. As happens every day in the financial sphere, today we find ourselves again confronted with industrial groups that are exploiting States that are exploiting regions. *Philippe Lamberts, Greens/ALE, debate 25/10/2011*

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MEPs displayed a different combination of emotions in debates on the refugee crisis. In these debates, there was a competition between two different frames: one based on fear and another based on compassion. Mainstream MEPs discussed fear in two ways: they acknowledged the need to take the fears of European citizens into account, and they expressed their own fear of the raise of populism in EU member states. Populist groups were also displaying fear but with a very different object: the



fear of migrants that were considered to be a threat to western civilization. When fear was placed at the forefront, policy solutions included border controls and the repatriation of refugees to countries generally considered unsafe. Right-wing populist MEPs had in addition other proposals, including building walls, copying the Australian model of migrant management, and establishing refugees in rich Arab countries.

The second policy frame placed the emphasis on compassion. Compassion implies a movement of moving towards helping refugees (see box). A compassionate approach justifies thus the support to specific policy proposals including the creation of safe and legal pathways to migration, humanitarian visas and funds for development policy. The Commission never used the term compassion explicitly to justify its policy proposals—in line with its unemotional approach—but Commission officials sometimes adopted a human approach, highlighting values such as fairness and solidarity, and expressed great concern by the loss of lives in the Mediterranean. In line with this view, Commission's proposals sometimes mentioned safe and legal paths to migration. Left-wing political parties used compassion and a humanist approach much more explicitly as main justification for their proposals. The fact that in this specific policy issue there were competing policy frames created a situation in which Commission officials initially formulated policy solutions based on both policy frames, including for example, both stricter border controls and a relocation system.

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#### Compassion and fear as constitutive elements

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Migration is a global phenomenon but one that requires measured, compassionate and effective European leadership. *Roberta Metsola, PPE, 07/06/2016*

Beyond the issues of relocation and identification procedure, which must be ethical and compassionate, we must ensure access to education and put in place mechanisms to support and heal children who are very often experiencing immense suffering and trauma, often resulting in serious mental health issues. *Julie Ward, S&D, 26/10/2016*

Security fears do exist among our citizens, and states must fulfil their obligations at the external borders if these fears are to be in any way allayed. *Roberta Metsola, PPE, 12/04/2016*

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### Challenging the status quo? Emotion-based strategies

The analysis showed that as expected, emotion-based strategies were mainly used by counter-politicians, but in the case of the refugee crisis they were also used by mainstream MEPs challenging the Dublin system (status quo).

The word shame was quite present in debates on the refugee crisis and it was always used within the framework of a shaming intention. Within these debates, the word pride was also used with a clear shaming intention with expressions such as 'this is not something we should be proud...'. Shaming was not only employed by counter-politicians but also by mainstream political parties including S&D and ALDE when they were challenging the position of the Council. The Spanish word *verguenza*, the French *honte*, and the Dutch *Schande* were also frequently used by the Greens and by the S&D (Table 8 in "Appendix 1"). When MEPs used shame in



their argumentation, they usually referred to the deaths in the Mediterranean, sometimes pictured as a graveyard full of corpses; the conditions in which refugees lived or to the hostile (or even violent) treatment reserved to refugees/migrants in the borders (see box). It is not surprising that even mainstream MEPs adopted an emotion-based strategy in this case, since defending refugees was considered to be morally right and this is one of the circumstances in which public sentiments are accepted (Sajó 2006). Most MEPs adopting a shaming strategy referred to international institutions and international rules, as well as to moral principles and European values. The shaming displayed by these MEPs is similar to the blaming and shaming strategy employed by human rights NGOs that also base their framing on compassion (Sanchez Salgado 2018).

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#### Shaming strategy by left-wing political groups

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Finally, Marielle de Sarnez and Natalie Griesbeck, two of our colleagues, went to the Hungarian border, and I can confirm what Mr. Pittella said: that what is happening there is a shame. It is shameful that it is happening in the European Union. *Guy Verhofstadt, ALDE, 14-09-2015*

What happens in the Mediterranean these days is a shame for politics and a shame for Europe.

*Eugen Freund, S&D, translated from Duch, 29-04-2015*

Let's implement an ambitious reinstallation programme that goes beyond this figure shamefully low of 5000 refugees. Let's offer to these migrants in danger legal immigration ways instead of closing our eyes over the corpses that cover the deeps of the Mediterranean. *Eva Joly, Greens/ALE-translated from French, 29-04-2015*

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The combination of the emotion-based blaming and shaming strategy and the policy framing based on compassion, adopted by many mainstream MEPs seems to have made possible the adoption of policy solutions that challenged the status quo. This is especially the case in 2015 when the EP supported the adoption of a relocation system by the Council. This is also reflected in the EP common position on the reform of the Dublin system adopted in November 2017 that was interpreted as a substantial reform.

As may be expected, challengers promoting policy change in the domain of migration/asylum did not only come from the left political spectrum. Populist groups were also clearly appealing to emotions but their emotion-based strategies did not find much resonance among the majority of MEPs and thus, their voices tended to be excluded from the EP. A concurrence analysis including keywords such as danger, threat, security, terrorism and Islam showed that right-wing populist political parties used these keywords much more frequently than the rest (Table 7 in “Appendix 1”). The fear mongering strategy included picturing refugees as terrorists or as profiteers of social welfare regimes, and it contributed to reducing levels of empathy and pity. This strategy stressing the culpability of the disadvantaged is often powerful against the conventional conception of compassion used by liberal parties and NGOs assuming that victims are pure and innocent (Hoggett 2006). As may be expected, challengers defending opposite frames engaged in dynamics of polarization: left-wing MEPs were often accused of hypocrisy and irresponsibility, while right-wing populist MEPs were accused of lack of solidarity and of arising fears (see box).



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Examples of fearmongering

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But there is a real and genuine threat. When ISIS say they want to flood our continent with half a million Islamic extremists, they mean it, and there is nothing in this document that will stop those people from coming. *Nigel Farage, EFDD, 29-04-2015*

You can not solve the mess created by the open borders with more European Union. That's why you should close the borders and des-islamize. *Vicky Maeijer, NI, 12-04-2016, translated from Dutch*

I think the so-called refugees on our borders need to be repatriated to Muslim countries, as their values are clearly incompatible with our liberal western democracies. This will avoid the current clash of cultures that denigrates the achievements of Western civilization and flouts the protection of women, the gay community and vulnerable children, who are being attacked by Muslim gangs and migrants who deplore our way of life. *Janice Atkinson, ENF, 12-04-2016*

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Examples polarization

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Middle-class and wealthy MEPs, who have enough cash to avoid the economic and social problems of mass migration, come up with schemes such as this to salve their consciences, but they ignore the poor, the voiceless, the immobile, who live throughout Europe and who will have to live on the edge and suffer the consequences of these schemes. *Steven Woolfe, EFDD, 9-09-2015*

But some, like Mr. Farage here, are inventing scare stories about these operations bringing in thousands of jihadists into Europe. But Mr. Farage knows full well that this is complete and utter nonsense and that it is about as likely as thousands of Martians coming to Europe. But he is not interested in the truth; he is only interested in getting elected. *Sophia in 't Veld, ALDE, 29-04-2015*

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The comparison with debates on the economic crisis showed that the role of emotions in debates on the refugee crisis may be far from being the general norm in the EP. Emotion-based strategies were much less present in the debates on the economic crisis and more interestingly, they were not adopted by mainstream MEPs. This seems to correspond to the undisputed prevalence of fear in policy framing within the economic crisis. The fear of collapse of the EU may have been the reason why pro-European groups tried to avoid destabilization (Roger et al. 2017). Mainstream parties that could have challenged the focus on austerity, such as the Greens and S&D endorsed instead giving more competences to the Commission.

Only once the word shame was directly employed with the purpose of blaming and shaming (referring to the austerity policies proposed by the troika); and the in-depth examination of the texts did not show any element pointing to any shaming strategy. The prevalence of a fear-based framing combined with the limited number of challengers using emotion-based strategies supported by anger and/or compassion may have contributed to the prevalence of the Council's preferences based on budgetary discipline.

Right-wing populist parties however seemed to use emotions—in line with their image of counter-politicians—picturing Southern European countries as untrustworthy and lazy (see box). This use of emotions was employed to challenge the hegemonic position consisting on stressing the importance of the unity of Europe with expressions such as 'we are all in the same boat'. Brief, challengers in this topic only included Eurosceptic populist groups with few chances to form a majority in



the configuration of the EP at that time. As it was the case in the refugee crisis, populist voices and their fear-based strategies had few chances to constrain the policy solutions available. However, their fear-based strategy may have indirectly contributed to the general atmosphere of fear that predominated in this policy area.

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#### Examples of emotion-based strategies in economic crisis debates

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Let me explain to you why these countries are broke. They are broke because of their own stupid leadership and politicians. It is immoral—immoral—to ask ordinary taxpayers of any country to pick up the tab for failed politicians and failed banks. *Godfrey Bloom, EFD group, 11 May 2011*

We cannot trust these Greeks, the Greek politicians who, together with the European Commission, swindled their way into the Euro with inaccurate figures and who now seem to be primarily occupied with increasing their own salaries. These are politicians that we can never trust. *Barry Madlener, NI, NL, 11 May 2011*

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## Conclusion

This article has showed how emotions were employed in EP debates in critical junctures and in this way, it has paved the way for further study of emotions in European parliamentary discussions and more generally, in EU policy-making. The study of the potential role of emotions is particularly relevant given that political institutions are typically an environment that denies the existence of emotions (Bergman Blix and Wettergren 2016).

This analysis has showed how emotions reflect dynamics of power and status in the EP. As expected, as general rule MEPs and Commission officials tended to display certain emotions such as trust in their discourses while displacing others, such as anger. Power position and status also played a relevant role. Commission officials took the position of unemotional gentlemen using mainly technical un-emotional language. While emotions played a relevant role in framing processes, only counter-politicians and challenging MEPs actively displayed a broader spectrum of emotions in their discursive strategies.

The comparative analysis has showed how the position of challengers and defenders of status quo differed per policy issue and how this affected dynamics of exclusion and policy outcomes. Right-wing populist' voices and fear-based strategies were invariably excluded from the EP in both crises. The voices of left-wing counter-politicians and their emotion-based strategies based on anger and compassion (blaming and shaming) were not completely excluded in the case of the refugee crisis and they were even adopted by mainstream MEPs. This compassion-based strategy served to challenge the status quo (Eksner 2015).

This article has also explored how the programmatic and relational role of emotions in the EP can shape policy outcomes via policy framing. In the debate on the economic crisis, mainstream MEPs focused on fear and thus, policy solutions were mainly geared to neutralize danger. Fear may have also contributed to overcoming collective resistance (Sajó 2006), facilitating the adoption of budgetary austerity. In the case of the refugee crisis, the fact that emotions such as anger and compassion



were allowed in the discussions led the EP to adopt positions that were oriented to helping refugees and front-line member states such as an obligatory relocation mechanism.

## Appendix 1

See Tables 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

**Table 3** Emotions on debates on the refugee crisis

Emotions	All	Emotion-related <sup>a</sup>
Trust	18	18
Suffering	16	16
Pride	14	14
Fear	18	13
Shame	12	12
Hope	43	12
Desperate	11	11
Happy	6	6
Compassion	5	5
Disappointment	4	4
Frustration	3	3
Regret	3	3
Worry	2	2
Sad	2	2
Resentment	2	2
Guilt	2	2
Surprise	1	1
Joy	1	1
Anguish	1	1
Anger	1	1
Panic	1	1
Passion	1	1
Emotions	167	131

Less occurrences are normal if we take into account that the texts are in several languages (no translation available)

<sup>a</sup>The first column includes all the times that the emotion keyword appeared following the automatic coding. The second column excludes linguistic expressions such as 'I hope' or 'I fear...'



**Table 4** Emotions in debates on the economic crisis

Emotions	All	Emotion-related <sup>a</sup>
Fear	41	25
Suffering	16	16
Trust	22	16
Hope	63	13
Worry	12	12
Happy	11	11
Disappointment	7	7
Surprise	6	6
Shame	6	6
Regret	10	6
Pride	6	6
Sad	5	5
Enthusiasm	5	5
Anger	3	3
Frustration	3	3
Indignation	3	3
Panic	3	3
Resentment	1	1
Humiliation	1	1
Euphoria	1	1
Desperate	1	1
Emotion tags	226	150

<sup>a</sup>The first column includes all the times that the emotion keyword appeared following the automatic coding. The second column excludes linguistic expressions such as ‘I hope’ or ‘I fear...’



**Table 5** Emotions used by political actors in debates on the economic crisis

Economic crisis	EC	Council	EPP	S&D	ALDE	ECR	EFD	GUE	Green	NI
Linguistic	10	6	11	17	8	8	6	1	0	2
Nonlinguistic	8	2	41	30	18	14	3	14	7	6
Anger	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Desperate	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Disappointment	0	0	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Enthusiasm	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
Euphoria	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fear	3	2	5	13	3	6	0	3	2	3
Frustration	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Happy	0	0	2	2	1	1	0	0	2	0
Hope	4	5	12	15	8	5	5	2	0	1
Humiliation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Indignation	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Panic	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Passion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pride	2	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Regret	0	0	7	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
Resentment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sad	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Shame	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	1	1	0
Suffering	2	0	5	4	0	2	0	3	0	0
Surprise	1	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0
Trust	5	0	9	3	2	0	1	0	0	2
Worry	0	0	2	1	2	2	1	2	0	2
Total	18	8	52	47	26	22	9	15	7	8



**Table 6** Emotions used by political actors in debates on the refugee crisis

Refugee crisis	EC <sup>a</sup>	Council	EPP	S&D	ALDE	ECR	EFDD	ENF	GUE/NGL	Green/ALE	NI
Linguistic	7	0	5	1	6	5	3	0	0	5	0
Non linguistic	23	5	19	12	15	15	13	2	9	6	0
Anger	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Anguish	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Compassion	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Desperate	1	1	1	2	0	1	3	0	2	0	0
Disappointment	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Fear	1	0	8	0	2	3	3	0	0	1	0
Frustration	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Guilt	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Happy	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hope	7	0	5	3	9	4	4	0	0	5	0
Joy	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Panic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Passion	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pride	3	1	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	2	0
Regret	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Resentment	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Sad	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Shame	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	1	6	1	0
Suffering	3	2	1	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	0
Surprise	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Trust	9	0	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	0
Worry	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	30	5	24	13	21	20	16	2	9	13	0

<sup>a</sup>In this table it seems that the Commission used more emotions in the topic of the refugee crisis than other key players, but this is not the case if we take into account the total number of interventions analysed (30 emotion keywords in 27 interventions in the refugee crisis debates and 18 emotion keywords in 20 interventions in crisis debates). The different between Tables 5 and 6 is mainly due to the fact that debates on the refugee crisis were not translated into English



**Table 7** Use of keywords pointing to a fearmongering strategy in debates on refugee crisis

	Danger	Fear	Islam	Terrorism	Threat	Total
EC	12	1	0	0	0	13
Council	2	0	0	0	0	2
EPP	6	8	5	9	5	33
S&D	12	0	3	11	4	30
ALDE	0	2	0	0	0	2
ECR	3	3	2	1	0	9
EFDD	1	3	12	3	12	31
ENF	4	0	13	6	3	26
GUE/NGL	5	0	0	1	1	7
Greens	7	1	0	1	1	10
NI	1	0	8	6	0	15

**Table 8** Use of shame (in different languages) by MEP in debates on the refugee crisis

	Honte	Indignation	Schande	Shame	Verguenza	Total
EC	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council	0	0	0	0	0	0
EEP	1	2	0	0	1	4
<i>S&amp;D</i>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>16</b>
ALDE	1	0	0	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	6
ECR	0	0	0	0	0	0
EFDD	0	0	0	0	0	0
ENF	0	1	0	1	0	2
<i>GUE</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	8
<i>Greens</i>	3	5	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>
NI	1	2	0	0	0	3
	15	11	5	12	8	51

Atlas.ti performs inter-code reliability test. While the  $c$ -coefficient is very low to be significant (due to the small number of occurrences under analysis) Atlas.ti has italicised the concurrences between the above emotions and left political parties as potentially relevant (the ones in double black and red) with a yellow circle

## Appendix 2: Original of the text translated into English by the author

Het is geen lege flessen inruilen voor volle flessen. Het zijn mensen die zoeken naar een veilige plek. Judith Sargentini, Greens/ALE, 8-3-2016.

C'est une nouvelle preuve qu'elle es tune oligarchie technocratique qui se moque des peuples europeens, de leurs identites et de leurs aspirations. Gilles Lebreton, ENF. 12-04-2016.



Madame la Présidente, vous êtes un petit peu comme des Sisyphes. La Commission a en effet pris la mesure de l'ampleur de la crise et, après trois paquets d'actions, après des évaluations, après des sommets qui se sont succédés, la mise en œuvre aujourd'hui reste brinquebalante, voire désespérante, puisque les États, chaque soir, défont ce que vous avez monté le matin. Nathalie Griesbeck, ALDE, 8-3-2016.

Was dieser Tage im Mittelmeer passiert, ist eine Schande für die Politik und eine Schande für Europa. Eugen Freund, S&D, 29-04-2015.

Mettons en place un programme de réinstallation ambitieux, au-delà de ce chiffre honteusement bas de 5 000 réfugiés. Offrons à ces migrants qui sont en danger des voies légales d'immigration plutôt que de fermer les yeux sur les cadavres qui jonchent le fond de la Méditerranée. Eva Joly, Greens/ALE, 29-04-2015.

De puinhopen van de open grenzen los je niet op door méér Europese Unie. Daarvoor moet je de grenzen sluiten en de-islamiseren! Vicky Maeijer, NI, 12-04-2016.

Aussitôt, l'Allemagne, par son ministre de l'intérieur, a menacé de sanctions financières les récalcitrants. Ce chantage est absolument indécent. C'est maintenant le Président Schulz, président socialiste, qui fait un coup de force antidémocratique et insupportable, avec la complicité du PSE et du PPE, en imposant un vote d'urgence. Marine Le Pen, ENF. 14-09-2015.

## Appendix 3: Additional explanation about methods

### Explanation about the selection of parliamentary speeches

The Parliamentary debates were retrieved in September 2017. I used the search function from the EP website: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/debates-video.html?action=1&tabActif=tabResult#sidesForm>

For the refugee crisis debates I selected all debates that used the words *migration* and *refugees* in their title. For the economic crisis debates I selected all the debates that had *economic crisis* or *financial crisis* on the title. The selected debates are thus expected to focus significantly on the topics selected. The translation of EP debates is not available since 2012 (European Parliament 2012), and thus, English translations were only available for the economic crisis debates.

### Choice of the emotion word markers

The main method used to identify emotions in text is the keyword spotting technique. The keywords usually used to identify emotions are words directly referring to emotions (emotion keywords). However, there is currently no classification referring to 'all human emotions' and emotion keywords are difficult to select because there is no accepted academic vocabulary for discussing emotions (Loseke 2009). As basis for the selection of emotion keywords I used Parrots' classification (2001). He proposes a list of basic emotions (including love, joy, surprise, anger, sadness



and fear) and related to these, a list of secondary and tertiary emotions. I added trust to this list since it is a politically relevant word that was not included in Parrot's classification. As may be expected, most of emotions from Parrot's classification did not appear in the debates. To avoid an excessively long list, I only displayed in the tables above the emotion keywords that I considered to be the most relevant for the analysis.

Emotion related keywords do not capture all the emotions present in a text and thus, the lexical affinity approach is sometimes used as an extension of the keyword spotting technique. The main limitations to both methods are the ambiguity in the keywords, the impossibility to detect emotions in sentences without keywords, and the lack of linguistic information. To solve these problems, I read all the texts and considered all the emotion keywords within their semantic and linguistic context. This led to establishing useful distinctions such as for example the distinction between emotions keywords used for purely linguistic purposes (I fear he will not arrive) and emotion keywords actually referring to the emotion itself (fear of the collapse of the EU). The in-depth reading of the texts also allowed taking into account emotional content in sentences without keywords.

### **Atlas.ti analysis**

While the use of Qualitative data analysis softwares (QDAS) such as Atlas.ti has become increasingly popular, different scholars use it very differently. QDAS are often assumed to bring qualitative research closer to quantitative analysis. While I used Atlas.ti to contribute to the efficiency, consistency and transparency of my analysis, I am not using it for quantitative purposes. For example, given the low amount of codes used in this qualitative analysis, the concurrences highlighted in the Atlas.ti concurrence analysis should not be considered as established correlations (let alone causations).

### **Reference for this methodology appendix**

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