THE IDEATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

in its legislative response to the surge in irregular migration

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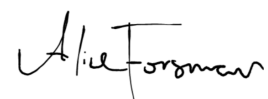Social Sciences Faculty
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1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.

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Prague, 16th of June 2021   **Alice Forsman**

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine the ideational leadership of the European Unions' executive institution, the European Commission, by studying its legislative response to the surge in irregular migration to the European Union in 2015 and 2016. In order to assess which form of ideational leadership the Commission expresses, key ideas, rooted in either liberalism or realism, were extracted from the selected documents with the help of an analytical tool, created for a deductive qualitative content analysis based on Watt Boolsens' seven step model. Ten legislative documents proposed by the Commission, deemed relevant to its response to irregular migration, ranging from the period May 2015 to June 2016, were selected. Meaningful entities of these documents were coded and designated a subcategory belonging to key ideas of either liberal or realist nature. These subcategories originate from the main categories: *State & Individuals, Humanism & Rights, Borders & Security,* and lastly *International actors & Cooperation*. This paper is thereby able to demonstrate which ideas prevail in the Commissions' legislative response to failures in policy during a time of crisis. The results indicate that the Commission expresses ideas predominantly rooted in realism, such as cooperation when deemed beneficial to the EU, call for enhanced border security, and differentiated rights depending on what group of migrants is referenced. Rather than ideas based in liberalism, such as prioritizing the security of migrants, the obligations of the EU to assist migrants, or the general importance of international actors. Although key ideas of liberalism such as on; shared and collective responsibility, as well as safeguards for all, are still very much present in the majority of documents.

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Table of content

Introduction

"Ideational leadership implies 'leadership with the help of ideas'. It is exercised by those key policy-makers who use strategies that are idea-based, and purposively aim for the achievement of change" (Stiller, 2010, p. 33).

Leadership of the European Union is not an unfamiliar conversation amongst scholars, experts, and within the Member States (Müller, 2016). While it reaches multiple levels, and often advances into questions about supranational versus intergovernmental powers (Schmidt 2016), it also frequently takes upon an individual-centered approach to different leaders within the Union (Verdun, 2017). The European Commission, as the EU's main executive branch, with legislative powers, decision-making capabilities, and prominent Presidents, is therefore not a rare subject area in leadership research (Cini, 2008). It is also a generally accepted understanding that the Commission is of institutional nature, due to the Union's construction, as well as of liberal roots, due to the goals and values of the EU (European Union, 2016). However, research of its leadership in policy and legislation does not necessarily take upon these, or other, ideas (Tömmel & Verdun, 2017). These forms of leadership studies are also not as common due to the institution remaining less of a political power, and more of a legislative proposing one. However, as many scholars have suggested, the Commission is not merely a bureaucratic institution, but one with political powers due to its "highly politicized tasks" (Christiansen, 1997, p 77). When political leadership studies have been adopted for the Commission, these have been mostly to its President's role and response to events and crises overall (Cini, 2008), and not the institution.

The ideational leadership approach has been argued by scholars such as Stiller (2010), to bridge the research gap between political ideas, political agency and policy changes. An ideational leader, is a policy entrepreneur who is policy- rather than power-oriented, and responds to policy failures by proposing new 'ideas' to make up for its inadequacies (Stiller, 2007). These ideas are made obvious when the policy entrepreneur responds to a major event or crisis, which exposes policy ineffectiveness (Butt, 2019). This paper has taken upon this approach, and views the Commission as an institution with leadership capabilities and legislative powers. It can therefore be studied as a whole, rather than focus on individual actors.

In order to step away from the study of ideology, one may focus solely on expression of a set of political ideas in materials produced by policy entrepreneurs and legislators, to get an overview of what form of ideational leader one is examining (Mudde, 2017). This gives the power to 'ideas', which can be of political nature, to keep the aspects of political policies or political theory. To avoid the topic of ideology, this paper takes upon two international relations theories, often applied to the study of migration documents; realism and liberalism. I refer to these as theories in this paper, due to the recited scholar's choice of names (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999 and Zogata-Kusz, 2012). However, one could also say that realism and liberalism are two political schools of thought.

Through such an approach, this paper contributes to alternative ways of viewing and examining leadership of an EU institution, by studying which key ideas rooted in; liberalism and realism prevail in the legislative response by the Commission to the surge in irregular migration in 2015 and 2016 to the EU (European Parliament, 2021). This paper studies which ideas are expressed by the Commission as an institution, by examining how it has legislatively responded during Union wide crises years which revealed EU policy failures. I have in this paper narrowed down the research to two years where the flow of migration was at the highest levels, while also solely examining documents deemed directed to irregular migration. Six documents are from the year 2015, starting in May, while four are from 2016, ending in June the same year. The reason for less documents selected in 2016, is due to the nature of the documents produced this year, as many are solely progress reports and updates.

This paper uses a deductive qualitative content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008), with the use of Watt Boolsens' 7 step model approach (Watt Boolsen, 2007), to create an analytical tool based on categories relevant for the study of migration documents; *State & Individuals, Humanism & Rights, Security & Borders,* and lastly *International actors & Cooperation.* Key ideas are allocated in regards to subcategories, used to extract the meaningful entities in the documents. This paper extracts which politically charged ideas are prominent and prevailing when the Commission responds to drawbacks of the Unions migration and asylum procedures, exposed during 2015 and 2016.

Research purpose and question

The purpose of this paper is to study the form of ideational leadership the European Commission expresses, as it legislatively responds to policy failures exposed during a time of crisis. This is done by examining which key political ideas, based in the international relations theories realism and liberalism, prevail in their legislative documents to the surge in irregular migration to the European Union in 2015 and 2016. Therefore, this papers' one and only research question is as follows:

➢➢ *Which key ideas, based in realism and liberalism, prevail in the legislative documents produced by the European Commission, when responding to the surge in irregular migration to the European Union in 2015 and 2016?* ➢➢

Background to the crisis

This section of the paper contributes to a background of the experiences of the EU in 2015 and 2016. In order to provide the context of the situation in which the analyzed legislative documents, proposed by the Commission, were responding to at the time.

In the summer of 2015, into the year 2016, the European Union had to respond to the most serious challenges due to migration flow since World War II. Over one million migrants and asylum seekers reached its shores and borders in a matter of a few months. In order to respond to the asymmetric impact of the sudden surge in migration, the Member States adopted varied approaches to the influx of refugees (European Parliament, 2021). This so-called 'migration, or refugee, crisis' exposed multiple layered shortcomings of the European Union's asylum system, where the in-force regulations and directives proved insufficient and inadequate to control asylum processes of such magnitudes (European Commission, 2016). Member States also failed to implement measures and policies as stated in the regulations directed to cope with irregular migration in the Union, and the asymmetrical responses and their effects therefore deepened (Niemann & Zaun, 2017). The levels of irregular migration was a more controversial concern amongst European citizens and Member States during and after the months of larger flows into the Union. Since irregular migration takes place outside legal pathways these forms of migration patterns are considerably more difficult to track for the Member States (Andersson, 2015). The political conversation revolved around questions of redistribution of refugees, national- versus

supranational responsibility, solidarity and the lack of the EU's leadership and collective action to these challenges in an effective and humane manner (Scipioni, 2017). The criticism and controversy of these issues were not merely one between the Member States, and the Union itself, but also aroused international criticism (Ibid). In order to restore confidence in its leadership abilities, the Union took measures to change its policy on migration. Therefore, the European Commission, as EU's executive branch, creator and implementer of legislation and decisions, dedicated a large part of the amended and new documents on migration to guidelines, policy and implementations to irregular migration activities, asylum- and return management procedures (European Commission, 2016).

In May 2015, the Commission took its first step to update its agenda to manage the refugee crisis in the *European Agenda on Migration.* Proposals since then followed, on the relocation of the migrants inside the Member States, and an *EU Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling* (Ibid)*.* In September, the same year, a second implementation package followed, directed at relocation of further asylum seekers within the Union as a crisis relocation mechanism. The package also included a comprehensive *Action plan on Return* and a *Return Handbook* of directives and proposals for returning irregular staying third country nationals from the EU. In October 2015, the Commission proposed a *Trust Fund for Africa* to address the root causes of the crisis through assistance (Ibid). Following the increasingly critical situation in the Western Balkans, the Commission agreed upon a *Joint Action Plan with Turkey,* to cooperate on responsibility sharing in regards to the influx of refugees to Turkey and further into the EU. This also led to a Commission proposal on a V*oluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme with Turkey* in December the same year. December further brought upon yet another package deal, also known as the *Border Package*, as an attempt by the Commission to set out principles on securing the external borders and protecting the free movement within Schengen (Ibid).

Comprehensive documents were further produced by the Commission in the months of 2016, following its 2015 Agenda on Migration. While the first and last months of the year were mostly dedicated to communications on the state of play and progress reports on the implementations of the documents mentioned, the Commission produced proposals on *Next steps in EU-Turkey cooperation* in March, in order to further advance in this cooperation on irregular migration (European Commission, 2020). In April the same year, the Commission produced comprehensive proposals for managing the refugee crisis, with, amongst others;

Enhancing legal avenues to the EU, to reform the common asylum system of the EU and to reduce irregular migration flows. The Commission also proposed legislative documents in regards to border management and security, such as *Stronger and Smarter Information Systems for Borders and Security.* Following the important month of May with multiple proposals ranging from *reforming the Dublin regulation in which* Member States are responsible for asylum applications, and frameworks with partners such as the *Partnership Framework with Third Countries* (Ibid). As mentioned above, many of the documents produced in 2016 were merely progress reports on proposals and regulations as already established by the Union. However, important proposals on common procedures were produced by the Commission during the months of May and July the same year, although deemed not as concerned with action on irregular migration.

Throughout 2015 and 2016, the Commission referred to the *Agenda on Migration* as the starting point for its produced documents, to respond to the challenges of the influx of irregular and refugee migration. During these turbulent months the Commission sought to respond, and combat the shortcomings in its asylum systems by updating its agenda, proposing reforms to existing regulations, as well as producing legislative documents (European Commission, 2016).

Definition of irregular migration

According to the Commission, an irregular migrant, in a global context, is a person who "owing to irregular entry, breach of a condition of entry or the expiry of their legal basis for entering and residing, lacks legal status in a transit or host country" (European Commission, 2021). What this ultimately means in the EU context, is that an irregular migrant, who is a third-country national, and present in the territory of Schengen, "does not fulfil, or no longer fulfils, the conditions of entry" (Ibid) as set out by the EU regulation of border crossing, stay or residence in the concerned Member State the person is in. In other words, migration taking place outside the laws at place concerned with migrating to the EU. The Commission also lists the synonyms used to refer to an irregular migrant, such as; clandestine migrant, insufficient documented migrant or, the ever so infamous, "illegal migrant" (Ibid).

Literature review

In the following part of this paper, previous literature on leadership and political leadership, EU leadership, European Commission leadership, and lastly ideational approach, power and leadership research, is accounted for. This is done in order to place the thesis in accordance with concepts and previous studies on the topic, but also for the relevance of the ideational approach in this paper.

Leadership and political leadership

As there exists extensive research and studies on the phenomena of leadership, it comes as no surprise that the concept of 'leadership' is widely contested. Within the social sciences discipline, Burns (1978) has been one scholar laying down the basics when theorizing the concept of leadership. He defines leadership as a matter of relationships; where a good leader follows the same values and goals as its followers. Burns also differentiates between forms of leadership, accounting for a 'transactional' leadership, which is where 'someone takes initiative to reach out and exchange values and ideas' (Burns, 1978). There are multiple of the more traditional understandings of leadership, such as the one of the historical demand-response nature, where leadership is defined by strategic responses to contemporary demand from the public (Gumport, 2003). Traditionally, the concept of leadership has been heavily associated with the 'great leader' and the 'followers', and the relationship between these two entities, like Burn's idea of relationships as a cornerstone for defining leadership (Davis & Jones, 2014). However, literature suggests that the former definitions of leadership are inadequate to fit with leaderships in today's societies. According to Davis and Jones (2014) 'leadership' is no longer understood in regards to its former traditional role, but something to be seen as 'bubble up' at times within institutions, and can take many forms (Ibid).

There are evidently multiple understandings of the concept of leadership, however; this paper will not dig deeper into this debate as it is not of as much importance to the topic as the one of 'political leadership', especially in regards to the international context. Tömmel and Verdun (2017) have in their paper *Political leadership in the European Union: an introduction* pointed to political leadership scholars such as Blondel (1987) and Elgie (2005). Blondel understands political leadership as an "exercise in coercive power" (Verdun & Tömmel, 2017, p 104), where leadership success is traced to the institutional setting and

especially the leader's personality traits. While Elgie studies the motivations and power of political leaders, focusing on the institutional settings as one of the main explanations for exercising leaderships (Tömmel & Verdun, 2017). These two scholars have, even if in fairly different ways, pointed to the institutional positions when examining leadership. Although this paper will not take upon this variable, as it will not try to examine explanatory reasons for its leadership skills, I believe it is still of importance to acknowledge this matter as of relevance for the exercising 'political leadership of the Commission', as it holds significant capabilities to influence, due to its position in the Union (Nugent, 1995).

Tömmel and Verdun (2017) also point to political leadership as being theorized in the international context; "the most prominent question is why and how individuals perform as leaders in international bargains, in order to solve collective action problems" (Tömmel & Verdun, 2017). Young (1991) is one scholar who has theorized and categorized political leadership, and distinguishes between three different types of political leaderships; 1) entrepreneurial leadership, 2) structural leadership, and 3) intellectual leadership. Young hereby separate leaders based on their different properties. Where the entrepreneurial leader makes use of negotiation skills to influence a policy outcome, structural leadership is based on the power position of a leader, and the intellectual leader instead depends on the 'power of ideas' to shape institutional bargaining (Young, 1991). Young thereby differentiates between leadership styles based on their specific properties when expressing its political influence (Ibid). As Young refers to different leaders and styles, this is applicable to individual actor leadership research. However, one may argue that the idea of breaking down the properties to theoretical research may be applicable to institutions as a whole, since specifically the Commission works as a unit in agenda setting and policy formulation, and thereby expresses leadership capabilities. Young's examples of the 'entrepreneurial leader,' as well as the intellectual properties of 'ideas' are thereby of great interest (Ibid).

Political leadership, as understood by Blondel, is an 'exercise in coercive power', and can take many forms, as argued by Elgie as well as Young. Both Young and Elgie leave room for interpretation of 'power of ideas' and 'motivations' as shaping leadership, while Young distinguishes leadership expression by theorizing these based on its specific properties. It is of value to examine which of these conceptualisations and ideas of leadership prevail in the study of the leadership of the EU.

Leadership and the EU

Development and changes to the institutions

Firstly, it is important to consider that European leadership has been under constant examination as its own field of research since the beginning of the cooperation (Müller, 2017). The work has evolved over the many years as the treaties have changed the power capacities of the different institutions, as well as shifts in their respective leadership positions. The EU treaties play an important part in the change in power relations of the EU institutions, and thereby the shifted leadership within and between them. One scholar who has examined this is Schakelton (2017), who studies the pivotal leadership of the European Parliament following the Lisbon Treaty as well as the 2014 elections (Schakelton, 2017). Shackleton argues for a growth in different paradigms, where executive power is now traced through elected representatives by the European citizens. Where the Parliament is now at the centre of this development, due to its growing influence within the EU as a whole, and role in transforming representative democracy at an EU level (Ibid). In other words, the shift of leadership on an EU level is the result of Parliament advocacy for treaty change, ultimately leading to an increase in its policy influence. This understanding of leadership can be connected to Elgie's ideas of political leadership, where motivations of political leaders, in this case the EP, in their institutional setting, is of utmost importance to explain exercised leadership and influence (Elgie, 2005).

Another example of research who has studied the changing leadership role of EU institutions is one by Nugent (1995), who examines the development of leadership capacities of the European Commission. Nugent found that the change in the Commission's institutional setting, such by its increased access to resources and constant shifts in its operating contexts, display that, over time, the leadership capacity of the Commission has constantly increased (Nugent, 1995). Since Nugent traces the institutional setting to leadership capacities, this research can be explained as going partly in hand with the understanding of Blondel (1987), where leadership success is traced to the institutional position. However; not taking into account the 'personality trait of a leader', as Nugent does not look at individuals specific leadership capabilities.

Studies of EU leadership are often based on each individual EU institution, and as shown by the above accounted for studies, these are often based on the research of the

institutional position changes, as traceable over time, and how the power of influence has developed the roles of these institutions. While there are far more studies one may want to mention, it is clear from these examples that the institutional position plays a crucial role in the power of influence and thereby exercised leadership of the EU institutions. Although these scholars generally do not look at leadership in regards to policy, it is recognized that one can study leadership in regards to specific institutions as these hold powerful capabilities.

EU Presidencies and leadership

Previous research on the political leadership of the EU is generally based on the individual leaders of the respective institutions. Tömmel and Verdun (2017) argue in their paper on EU leadership research, that a substantial amount of studies have been done in regards to the position of the institution's individual leaders, especially those more prominent, such as Jacques Delor (Tömmel & Verdun, 2017). The formal position of a leader is thereby of importance in EU leadership research, as this is where they may practice negotiation skills and express influence. The leadership style, agenda setting as well as the success and failures of the Presidents of the Council and the European Council, and especially the European Commission, have not so surprisingly, been under scholarly investigation. Scholars such as Tallberg (2003) and Tömmel (2008) have studied the Council Presidencies and their abilities in performing effective deal brokering. In his research, Tallberg contests the generally accepted conception of Council Presidencies, where their abilities to promote policies are seen as of highly "limited impact" (Tallberg, 2003, p 16). Distinguishing between three forms of agenda-shaping: agenda-setting, agenda-structuring and agenda exclusion, Tallberg studies 6 Presidency cases (Germany, Finland, Portugal, France, Sweden and Belgium), to demonstrate how Presidencies influence outcomes in EU policy-making. Arguing that the effectiveness in leadership of each President does matter to the success and failures of the Council (Ibid). The role of the individual is hereby of importance in these studies.

Verdun (2017) conveys in her text on '*Political Leadership of the European Central Bank*', that there has been a great amount of literature dedicated to the leaders of these previously mentioned institutions, while little has been dedicated to the leaders of the European Central Bank. Therefore, she examined the ECB leadership from a theoretical perspective, arguing that the presidents during the crisis, Jean-Claude Trichet and Mario Draghi, expressed leadership skills by retrieving followers through their rhetoric, and clear stance in their willingness to "do whatever it takes" (Verdun, 2017, p 216). She thereby

demonstrates that the presidents of the ECB practiced 'transformative leadership' skills, by showing great willingness to save the eurozone, and were consequently influential leaders during a crisis (Verdun, 2017).

However, the most extensively examined Presidencies are by far those of the European Commission. Cini (2008) explains the reason for this in her paper '*Political Leadership in the European Commission: The Santer and Prodi Commissions, 1995–2005*' as; "the expectation of Commission leadership comes not only from the treaties and the Commission's functions, formal or otherwise, but also emerges from the mythology surrounding the Presidencies of strong leaders" (Cini, 2008, p 1). The contested nature and functions of the Commission, as well as ideas of the 'strong leader' Commission President, have thereby attracted a dense amount of scholarly literature. Presidents such as Prodi, Santes (Cini, 2008), and especially Delor (Endo 2008, Ross 1995, Drake 2000, Müller 2017) have all been examined in great detail. While Cini, Ross and Drake provide dense descriptions of success and failures over the years of the Presidencies, scholars such as Endo analyses the constraints contra opportunities of, specifically in this case, the capabilities of Delor (Endo, 2008). Müller instead studies and compares three Commission President's strategic agenda setting capabilities, by comparing the movement of when they announced their agendas, and how the main points were developed into policy over time (Müller, 2017).

These scholars who studied, and factored in, the importance of the individual leader traits in leadership, one may argue fall under both Blondel's and Elgie's ideas of political leadership, as the personality, as well motivations, matter for specific actors power of influence (Blondel 1987, Elgie 2005). While a few of the scholars also take into account the institutional setting as limiting and/or increasing Presidency capabilities. There is provenly quite extensive literature dedicated to the Presidents in regards to leadership, especially of the Commission. Perhaps not surprisingly, as Nugent (1995) argues for the institution's growing capabilities, and Cini's (2008) point of the great 'expectation of Commission leadership'. However, a fairly limited number of these scholars have dedicated the research to the Commission's leadership in specific policy, or the agenda setting. As Verdun and Tömmel also point out; "for a large part, this research is based on a dense description of events and activities; much less attention has been given to *political leadership*" (Tömmel & Verdun, 2017, p 107). These scholars also conduct fairly single actor-centered research, rather than

institutional leadership. Therefore, this paper will now account for studies dedicated to the 'role' and leadership of the Commission as an institution.

The role and political leadership of the European Commission

The European Commission, as we already understand, plays an important role within the EU, and is an area of interest for academic debate. Nugent (1995) argues for the growing leadership capacities of the Commission, and Verdun and Tömmel (2017) accounts for the dense amount of research on the Commission Presidencies. However, little of the research accounted for in this paper deals with the role and political leadership of the Commission as an institution within the EU. A simplified answer to why this is the case, lies in the bureaucratic nature and image of the Commission. Christiansen (1997) accounts for this in his paper on '*Tensions of European Governance*'; "it is a common reflex to view the Commission as a bureaucracy...the Commission has for many in Europe become synonymous with the very concept of 'bureaucracy'"(Christiansen, 1997, p 76). Without going excessively into the definition of bureaucracy, this paper has taken a similar stance as the one of Christiansen, where bureaucracy is seen as "aspirations towards rule-orientation and rule-coherence, hierarchical organization, functional specialization, the development of standard operating procedures" (Ibid, p 77). With this in mind, the Commission should, to a certain degree, be considered as of bureaucratic nature. However, to view this institution as simply the bureaucratic arm of the EU, is to disregard the circumstances surrounding its role in the activities and field of influence; "the major fields of Commission activity – proposing legislation and supervising the implementation of decisions – are highly politicized tasks" (Ibid, p 77). In other words, the Commission is also an institution with political leadership capabilities, due to its ability to propose legislation and setting the political agenda of the EU.

As shown in the above mentioned literature, political leadership of the Commission is often associated with the Commission Presidencies. This is quite understandable as the political leadership concepts and theories are often more easily applicable to the individual-centered perspective. However, Cini and Suplata (2017) are two scholars who instead attempt to approach the institution, the Commission's, 'policy leadership' as a form of political leadership. Rather than studying the political leadership of the Presidencies, they "conceptualise policy leadership as the product of political agency and policy capacity, and apply this conceptualisation empirically to the case of European mobile roaming" (Cini & Suplata, 2017, p 1). They argue that policy leadership is a mix of both political- and

administrative leadership concepts, as it takes upon the properties of 'policy entrepreneurship' (Ibid). As the Commission plays a role as an "influential supranational policy entrepreneur" (Kaunert, 2007, p 388), this can be argued as an adequate analytical focus. However, Cini and Suplata also take the approach of "successful policy leadership" (Cini & Suplata, 2017, p 4), where the majority of their research considers the *context* in terms of the achievement of policy and policy outcomes. They are therefore not as interested in analyzing the political content of the policies put forward and implemented. Same goes for the paper by Kaunert, who examines the significant role of the Commission in the political adoption process (Knauert, 2007).

Since the Commission plays a significant role as EU's supranational policy entrepreneur, and has the ability to "exercise coercive power" (Verdun & Tömmel, 2017, p 104), this paper considers whether there is another strategy to study its leadership, through channels other than the ones of Presidencies, position and the contexts of policy success. As a next step, this paper accounts for the ideational approach to leadership studies that may help bridge the gap between politics, policy and EU leadership research.

Ideational approach, power and leadership

Literature dedicated to ideational leadership is extensively limited compared to political leadership studies. Although, there exists a field of research that studies an individual leader and its power, through an ideational lense. The approach to ideational leadership varies greatly depending on the focus of analysis. However, the general agreement amongst scholars is that ideational research gives supremacy to the role of 'ideas' in policy-making. Schmidt (2008) defines ideational research as the emergence of a fourth approach to institutionalism, where ideational scholars emphasize ideas as one of the main explanatory factors in political analysis, policy-making and policy formulation (Schmidt, 2008). The fairly simplified, but also clear notion is that; 'ideas matter' in policy-making and thereby legislation.

One scholar who has taken upon this approach is Butt (2019), who studies ideational leadership in legislation, in the specific case of changes to the Right to Free and Compulsory Education in Pakistan (Butt, 2019). Butt has found, through an analysis of the policy-process, responsible actors and legislation formulation; that actors' orientation to policy issues, and

thereby later legislation, is "undeniably ideational" (Ibid, p 3). The result of his study confirms that ideas at a normative level as well as cognitive level, are both used in the foreground for policy formulation (Ibid). This paper does not intend to study the Commission as a policy entrepreneur through a cognitive level analysis, as the focus chosen by Butt, who studies the correlation between cognitive beliefs and ideas into formulation of policy, for two main reasons. Firstly, as the above mentioned research suggests, there is already an individual-centered focus in leadership research in regards to the study of the Commission. If a cognitive level analysis would have been adapted to study the expressed ideational leadership of the Commission, this paper would have had to study the correlation between the ideas of each individual policy maker behind the documents, and later how these ideas took form in the legislative documents, this approach is simply not feasible. Secondly, while attempting to study *why* specific ideas are present in legislative documents is a very tempting research, I would argue that this is an especially difficult question to answer. One would not only need to go into depths of the institutional setting, study changes to the agenda of the institution, but also perform interviews with the policy-makers behind these proposals. I would like to stress that although Butt's ability to answer the questions of *why* ideational leadership takes form is an interesting focus (Butt, 2019), it would be too deep waters for a master level thesis. However, from what the above presented research has shown, there is a lack of the political and policy aspects in European leadership studies, and, as suggested by Butt, the notion of ideas are of absolute importance in regards to leadership in policy formulation. Therefore, the study of ideas in legislative documents is still very much relevant for leadership studies of the EU.

The well-known scholar specializing in populism, Mudde (2017), has also touched upon the 'ideational approach' to leadership studies. However, in this case, in regards to the study of populism. This paper will not go into detail of his definitions, as these are primarily in regards to the study of European and Latin American populism. Although, he presents arguments relevant for an ideational approach worth raising. Mudde touches upon the reasoning that ideational research is one way to shy away from the term ideology as, in this case populism, is essentially about a set of varied ideas in general, rather than an ideology itself (Mudde, 2017). This scholar states that the ideational approach does not deny the importance of leadership, but rather than talking about a leader set in a specific ideology, it gives the power to ideas and their features, above an ideological background (Ibid). In this paper, I do not wish to study the leadership from an ideological point of view, as the 'official'

ideology of the Commission is stated officially as a liberal institution (European Union, 2020). However, if one looks into the ideational research by Mudde, you find arguments for assuming, in this case, that leaders portray a set of ideas, with political features (Mudde, 2017). What this entails for this paper, is that if one would base the research of a leader on ideas, with features stemming from an ideology or political theory, you are already moving closer in perceiving its leadership type and features. Mudde also argues that the main strength of an ideational approach is its distinguishability, as there are clear boundaries set by the examiner when solely focusing on ideas (Ibid). Ideas are additionally easier to define than an ideology as a whole, making such an analysis rather straightforward. Ideas are easier to track in the analyzed material, and thereby adaptable for many different sets of material. Mudde thereby argues that these ideas are thereby categorizable, as well as applicable to multiple levels of analysis and cross-national and cross-regional studies (Ibid).

Carstensen and Smith (2016) are two scholars who examine ideational power and attempt to theorize this concept. In their paper they account for a form of institutional power, similarly adopted by Butt, "we define ideational power as the capacity of actors (whether individual or collective) to influence other actors' normative and cognitive beliefs through the use of ideational elements" (Carstensen & Smith, 2016). This approach may be interesting to explore further, as there is an element of the capacity of the actors. However, the approach suggests that an actor (or collective) attempts to influence beliefs of others, and I would argue that the element of the policy-making formulation may be lost in these studies of the Commission, as in this paper. These scholars mainly deal with the 'ideational power' (Ibid), where the elements of specific leadership are not as apparent. Although, it does suggest that a 'collective' can express a capacity to exercise ideational ideas. I argue that their work displays that an ideational approach can also be applied to a collective of policy-makers, and therefore an institution as a whole.

An author who specifically deals with ideational leadership and policy is Stiller (2010). She has studied changes to the German welfare state reforms in accordance with the ideational leadership (Stiller, 2010). Stiller provides in-depth case studies of individual actors' reforms to the German welfare state. Major reforms include healthcare, unemployment insurance and pensions. In her book she constantly argues for the power of 'ideas' in policy-making, specifically in the case of the German ministers responsible for these changes (Ibid). Stiller presses on the need to view a 'policy entrepreneur' as an

ideational leader that is overcoming institutional obstacles to portray their ideas in legislation. For this scholar, to conceptualize a policy entrepreneur as ideational, they have to be more policy-oriented rather than power-oriented (Stiller, 2007). An ideational leadership mechanism is therefore to view "policy failure or loss of effectiveness" which "brings on the search for alternatives" (Ibid, p 9). What this entails, is that a policy-maker who displays traits of improving policy, by proposing changes or new legislations to proven inadequate policies, rather than attempting to acquire power, can be considered as an ideational leader.

This paper understands the role of the Commission as heavily policy-oriented rather than power-oriented, due to its position and capabilities within the EU (Christiansen, 1997). As well as its displayed willingness, during the two years of crises, to improve the EU's legislative response (European Commission, 2016). Therefore, we can view this institution as an ideational leader. However, as mentioned in regards to the paper by Butt, I do not attempt a study of *why* the examined ideas are present in the legislative document analyzed in this paper. Similarly, the approach taken by Stiller of studying *who* is an ideational leader, would entail issues for this paper, such as individual-centered focus of the specific policy-makers, and too grand scope of study. Therefore, this paper mainly takes upon the arguments of *how* to view an ideational leader, as well as the methodological approach to extract ideas from the documents, as used by Stiller. I wish in this paper to simply examine which *form* of ideational leadership the Commission expresses.

Stiller argues that leadership research and concepts tend to "underspecify how leaders achieve policy change" and that idea-based theories more often than rarely "neglect the role of political agency" (Stiller, 2010, 43). As I in this paper, as mentioned, do not intend to study how specific leaders achieve policy change, these arguments might not seem relevant to raise. However, Stillers' constant reference to the importance of the role of the political agency and presence of ideas in major policy reforms, does defend the focus of examining ideas in legislative response of an agency with significant legislative-, and political influence.

According to Stiller, policy change refers to change in problem definition and goals, where policy failures expose the need for update and change. Ultimately leading to changes in legislation (Stiller, 2010). In other words, when a major crisis or event has occurred, this leads to a change of problem definition and goals, and these new ideas find their way into legislative proposals. Stiller argues that with the use of a qualitative content analysis, one

may study the ideational leadership of actors by tracing these ideas in legislative documents. These studies have the ability to bridge a gap between the variables; policy change, political agency and political ideas, in leadership research (Ibid). While this author has dealt with specifically German Ministers and their respective changes to the welfare state reforms, Stiller's book is one of great interest for this paper. As it defines ideational leaders, as well as arguing for ideational leadership research as a way to close the gap between policy, leadership, and the policy agent, through idea-driven methods. If taken upon arguments by Stiller, and these scholars, it is of interest to study the ideational leadership of the Commission, if one would extract ideas in documents produced to respond to policy drawbacks.

Relevance of study

Undoubtedly, there has been a great amount of research dedicated to the study of leadership and political leadership of the EU, specifically the European Commission. This research however, is often centered around the individual leaders (Cini, 2008). Arguments presented also demonstrate that the Commission is not merely a bureaucratic institution, but one with politicized power as a policy entrepreneur (Christiansen, 1997). If studies take the aspect of the political leadership of the Commission into account, these are often based on the success of negotiations and specific events, rather than the content of its policies in legislation (Tömmel & Verdun, 2017). The ideational leadership approach has also not been applied to the study of leadership of the EU. This field of research demonstrates that the 'power of ideas' does play a significant role in policy-making, as these are 'politically loaded' changes to legislative documents (Schmidt, 2008). While this research is first and foremost applied to individuals, the previously mentioned studies show that the Commission may be studied as one policy entrepreneur, due to its institutional position. I thereby argue that the study of the ideational leadership of the Commission in legislation helps bridge the study between politics, policy and EU leadership research. As well as providing alternative aspects on how to view and examine the leadership of this institution, which is of great interest due to the Commissions' profound influence within the EU (Nugent, 1995).

Previous research suggests that the ideational leadership of a policy entrepreneur is easier examined if this is carried out in regards to a change of events (Butt, 2019). This paper therefore studies the Commission, in how it has legislatively responded to policy failures

exposed by a change of events. The policy field this paper will account for is irregular migration, and specifically the years 2015 and 2016, which exposed EU migration policy drawbacks. Primarily, it was considered whether press releases made by the Commission, or an analysis of the Commission President's speeches addressing the crisis, could have been interesting additions to this paper's findings. This form of material selection would also be closer to the approach taken by Stiller (2010) and Butt (2019) in their ideational leadership research. However, this thesis attempts to distance the study from a focus on individuals in EU leadership research, so although it would have been an interesting addition to the analysis, only legislative documents produced by the Commission have been selected.

Two IR theories and their key ideas

In an attempt to study the Commission's ideational leadership, the notion of these political 'ideas' need to be defined. Carstensen and Smith (2016) urge the need to theorize ideational power research, and Mudde (2017) expresses that 'ideas' in these forms of studies are categorizable. Mudde also argues that ideas in leadership research is a well suited focus when examining a leader, as ideas themselves are the base for a political ideology with similar features (Mudde, 2017). This paper is of the understanding that one way to accompany these arguments is to define ideas from a political 'ideal' point of view. Specifically with the use of political theories that are applicable to studies of international actors (Zogata-Kusz, 2012). The notion of ideal type ideas come from the understanding of Weber and his definition. Essentially what defines an ideal type is when a conception of something is in its 'typical' essence. You may describe an ideal type as a model of a group, class or category with certain features and characteristics in their perceived perfection (Swedberg, 2017). What this means for political theories is, simply put, that the strongest ideas, and how these theories ideally perceive and respond to certain dimensions, are these theories 'ideal ideas'. In other words, the key political ideas of these theories.

These political ideas can be defined with the use of political theories, as well as you may categorize these based on which theory each belongs to. By extracting the key ideas from a theory, one comes closer to defining the ones useful to extract which are present in the selected documents. As Mudde argues for studying a leader from an idea point of view, rather than an ideology (Mudde, 2017), I have in this paper chosen not to use polarized ideologies such as conservatism and socialism to the study of ideas, but rather two political theories

useful for an international relations level analysis, as well as in the study of migration legislative documents (Meyers, 2000). This paper will hereby account for two of the most influential international relations theories, and extract the key ideas of these, to be used in the analysis of the ideational leadership of the Commission.

Realism

Realism is, as mentioned above, one of the most influential and well used theories in the study of international relations and actors. It is also a well-developed theory in research on migration policy making, and often used in EU migration studies (Zogata-Kusz, 2012). It is studied as a factor in shaping policy, and often immigration policy, and is therefore of interest for this paper (Ibid). Realism is based on four main assumptions. Firstly; the state is the main actor and decision maker, and is the most important unit that should be analyzed when studying international relationships. Actors such as international organizations are of little interest, as these are only seen as extended means that states can use to maximize the opportunities to obtain their own goals and interests (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999). The second assumption is that the state should be seen as a unified actor. Domestic policy may be divided into several different camps that strive for different goals, but towards the rest of the world one carries a united front. Third; the state acts rationally. Its actions are based on what is best for the state, which means that all aspects in all choices are considered, and what generates the most benefit becomes decisive for which approach one chooses (Ibid). The starting point is to make the most rational decisions according to the information you have. The fourth and final assumption is that national security is the most important of all international problems. State survival is the primary goal and to achieve this requires security, and to be safe in an anarchic world you need power (Zogota-Kusz, 2012).

Realism therefore puts the state in the center of all situations, based on rational choice. Realism's views on mankind and human rights as; humans are attached to the political constellation, or state, to which one belongs, and it is this state's responsibility to take care of their well-being. People outside their state have responsibility for themselves, and as it is up to each state to look after its own citizens (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999). Neo-realism, or structural realism, is one branch within this theory that accepts the broader concepts of security, especially in regards to migration policy (Zogata-Kusz, 2012). The securitization of migration points to the societal securities, where the state has the main responsibility to protect the survival of society. These security issues vary from the socio-economic status,

security to protect against crime, to national homogeneity, which is the national identity (Tsoukala, 2005). These perspectives of neorealism are generally understood and accepted, however many theorists of realism would not agree with such a broad concept of security (Zogata-Kusz, 2012). For the matter of this paper, these key ideas in the theory of realism, and neorealism, will not be contested due to the theory's extensive branches, as it is not relevant to give a detailed account of all its different orientations. As understood from this literature, the key ideas of this theory are security, power and survival. The human factor is only the one where humans are seen connected to its own state, and the state has the main authority to protect its own interest. International actors are also not considered of importance, and cooperation with these or other states are therefore only in place when it is beneficial to the own states' interest (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999).

Liberalism

The second IR theory this paper will account for, to use as ideal political 'ideas', is liberalism. This well-developed theory, with its many different orientations, is also often useful for studies of migration and policy (Zogata-Kusz, 2012). Liberalism is frequently viewed as realisms opposing theory. These two theories are, in other words, seen as perceiving issues and policy completely differently (Ibid). When it comes to the basis of liberalism theory, liberalism recognizes that the 'free human' is always the starting point. The state of nature is this: humans, together with other individuals, build institutions from below that are in line with the individuals interests (Ericson, 2009). The state is therefore not the starting point or base, but rather perceived as a mere function to organize its individuals, to ensure that agreements are kept, and that each individual and collective benefits are united and maximized. This means that the state's existence is to protect the freedom of individuals (Ibid). Since liberalism believes that all humans are born free and equal, all rights should ultimately apply to all people, regardless of where one is born or which state one belongs to. There is thus a collective responsibility to all individuals, not just those who belong to their own state (Ibid).

When it comes to specifically the study of international relations, liberalism in comparison to realism, views other international organizations and states of utmost importance; "the proponents of liberal theories recognise a state as only one of many actors on the international scene" (Zogata-Kusz, 2012, p 9). These actors should be seen as independent, acting in the interest of themselves, and should therefore be taken into account

when dealing with international issues. Thereby, the state is not viewed as a unified actor in the international arena, as its decision-makers can change and act transnationally to reach mutually beneficial cooperation (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999). The unified front of the state, according to realism, does not exist similarly in liberalism, as the state's interests change. For especially the liberalist branch neoliberal institutionalism, important actors include international institutions and multinational corporations. "States open their economies more easily to both trade and migration when there is some international or among them that can assist them with organising cooperation and solving problems" (Zogata-Kusz, 2012, p 9). Liberalism sees cooperation and interdependence as a path to peace as the assumption is that one does not go to war with someone one is dependent on, the so-called democratic peace. Unlike realism, liberalism has to some extent a normative ambition, where peace, welfare and justice are sought after (Ericson, 2009).

As previously mentioned, this paper will not go into the contested nature of these IR theories' key ideas, as the orientations of these theories are too grand. Therefore, the ideas of liberalism as stated in these paragraphs are the ones taken into account during the analysis of this paper's material. That is, that the ideal liberal ideas view all humans as born free, and all rights should thereby belong to everyone, not just the individuals within the state. The state is seen as a mere function to protect and maximize individuals benefits and security. International actors are seen as of utmost importance in cooperation, and there are significant advantages for the state to be open (Zogata-Kusz 2012, Viotti & Kauppi 1999, Ericson 2009).

The dimensions and the key ideas

To clarify the ideas, I have accounted for four dimensions, also called categories, relevant for studies of migration legislative documents. These are; *Humanity*, *Responsibility & Justice*, *Borders & Security*, and lastly *Cooperation*. It also accounts for the key ideas as extracted from these two IR theories as stated above, as both have deeply rooted ideas concerned with these categories, relevant for migration. These will also be used as the basis for the methodological tools to the material.

Chart 1: Dimensions and the key ideas

Dimensions	Liberalism	Realism
Humanity	All human beings are born free, and are therefore equal to other human beings, and should enjoy the same legal rights. Individuals do not have duties to the state.	Human beings are connected to 'groups'. This group is responsible for this human, and its actions. Individuals have duties to the state.
Responsibility & Justice	All human beings are equal to the law. There is a collective responsibility for all humans. The state should act on their best behalf, and individual rights are central.	Legal rights should only cover the group to which one belongs. State has the main power to perform justice and has responsibility for its own individuals.
Borders & Security	Open borders and movements are important for prosperity. Security is important for all, not just the state's own individuals.	Strong borders are important to protect the state's own interest. Security of one's own state is of utmost priority in an international context.
Cooperation	Mutual recognition and cooperation is good, since all parties have a chance of winning. International actors are of utmost importance.	Cooperation in place only when beneficial for one's own state. International actors are not important.

(Zogata-Kusz, 2012), (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999) (Ericson, 2009)

Concept definition and employment

In order to clarify how I in this paper have chosen to adapt these ideas onto the analysis of the legislative documents, an explanation of the use of concepts and wordings, found in Chart 1, are necessary before moving forward.

Firstly, there is an imminent need to define what I mean in this paper when a key idea refers to 'state'. Due to the Commission's desire to achieve a common European asylum system, and produce legislation in the interest of the entire Union (European Commission, 2021), this paper does not focus on individual member states and their asylum procedures. Since the Commission intends to work for the whole Union, by proposing legislation for a common response and independently from the member states, I have chosen to adapt this concept as not symbolizing Member State competence or interests, but rather to the EU as

one collective. What this entails for this paper, is that 'state' ultimately refers to either the Union and its agencies or when Member States act collectively with the use of EU agencies. Therefore, when this analysis refers to 'state' interest, I do not refer to the individual member states' interests, but rather to the entire Union's interests. An example of this is found in subcategory 4.a, in the analytical tool 1 of this paper, where 'State's legal enforcement' is central to a key realist idea. What this entails for the analysis, is that the documents examined from when they are referring to the legal instruments of the EU, such as Frontex, and not to a specific Member States' legal instruments.

Similar explanation is needed for the concept of 'all individuals' and 'state's individuals'. When I in this analysis refer to a key idea where 'all individuals' is central, this essentially means all human beings who are not necessarily EU citizens. In other words, all forms of migrants and individuals. While when I address 'state's individuals', this refers to the EU's own citizens, or an origin country responsible for 'their own citizens'. Likewise definition applies when I mention 'group belonging', which is key to realism (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999). What this entails for the analysis, is when an individual is referred to in the legislative documents to either have, or have not, the same rights as other individuals depending on which 'grouping' they would belong to. An example of this is when an irregular migrant does not attain the same legal rights as a classified refugee by the Union. In parallel, when I in the analysis refer to the concept of 'collective responsibility', addressing who is responsible for individuals (in this case the irregular migrants), this also takes upon some properties of group belonging. Liberalism argues that there is a need for collective responsibility for all individuals (Ericson, 2009), and this concept takes form when a legislative document refers to the Union's responsibility to assist all individuals, including irregular migrants, not just the citizens of the EU or other forms of migration. What this entails for the realism ideas, is that if a document refers to the responsibility of the origin country of the irregular migrants as responsible for its own citizens, this falls under the concept and category as the 'state responsibility for its own individuals'.

Another word demanding definition for the analysis, is when the concept of 'duties', such as individual duties towards the state. Duties are simply when either the state, or an individual, has an obligation towards the counterpart. An example of this is if a legislative document references legal obligations or responsibilities of the irregular migrant to the Union's law enforcement, this would fall under the concept of duties of individuals towards

the state.

Due to liberal ideas placing the individual rather than the state at the center (Ericson, 2009), there is an important need to adapt the concept of the 'individual situation'. When I reference an individual's specific situation in the methodology and analysis, this simply refers to whether the documents account for, or mention, individual situations of irregular migrants as important or a part of the legislative text. In other words, if the individual situation of the migrant is taken into account.

Lastly, a concept with a pressing need of definition is the 'international actors'. When I take upon this concept in the analysis, as understood from the IR theories defined by specifically Zogata-Kusz (2012), I employ it in the reference to simply any actor on an international level that is not part of the EU itself. This applies to NGOs, third countries and other agencies referenced in the legislative documents. If these actors are considered either of importance, or only incorporated when beneficial to the 'state' (also known as the EU), is up to the wording and situation to when it is referred to by the Commission in the documents. This is also discussed during the reporting chapter of this paper.

Methodological reasoning

As I intend to study expressed ideas by the Commission, an appropriate method needs to be adapted to extract these from the documents. I need to adopt a relevant method that can take into account the key ideas (as expressed in Chart 1), the policy entrepreneur (the Commission) and attend to the large selection of material. A quantitative analysis can be argued heavily focused on the data selection and processing, able to account for a large amount of materials, especially if the approach chosen is a quantitative content analysis (Esaiasson et. al, 2012). While this is definitely considered an important factor for the validity and transparenance of the results, it is my understanding that solely a quantitative study would not be able to account for the overarching political ideas of the text, as the interpretation part of analysis would not be given as much room. A qualitative approach is argued as better developed to examine "the essential contents of text's parts, as a whole and context" (Ibid, p 211).

Adopting an ideal type, or simply, an idea analysis as a qualitative approach, would

have been of interest for this paper, as these forms of methods are well suited when the researcher wants to analyze and extract information from politically rooted texts (Swedberg, 2017). The ideal type analysis is argued suitable when the intent of research is to demonstrate certain features in text, in accordance with elements as 'typical' for, and belonging to a phenomenon (Swedberg, 2017). How this approach would have expressed itself in this paper, is that the legislative documents could have been analyzed in accordance to the dimensions as shown in Chart 1, where what is considered in the text as ideal ideas, could have been demonstrated. However, this research is sometimes considered as fairly vague, and therefore weaker in its validity, as only the 'typical' or 'ideal' parts of the texts are considered, and always open for interpretation (Esiasson et al., 2012). Similar issues may occur if an idea analysis would have been adapted for this research. The ideas in an idea analysis are in most cases extracted freely without a clear model of what is of most interest for the study (Ibid). The targeted focus on specific ideas of such an analysis could therefore be lost. However, the main reason for overlooking this method is based on Esiasson et als' arguments related to the idea analysis method. The authors describe these forms of research as of uninterest in 'who says what', but rather freely study 'what ideas are being expressed' (Ibid). Naturally, the ideas expressed are important for this papers' research question. However, since the actor, the Commission, is of utmost importance, this methodology has not been chosen for its uninterest in the entrepreneurs' significance.

I will now account for a methodological approach that takes upon properties of both qualitative and quantitative research, in order to attain both a high level of transparency, feasibility and validity of the research from an explicit level, as well as the ability to generalise the results from the findings on an implicit level of analysis. The same form of approach as adopted by Stiller (2010) in her book of research on the ideational leadership in German welfare state reforms.

Qualitative content analysis
To provide a transparent analysis, one has to adapt a clear set of analytical tools for an analysis that can be transferred to all the material in question. Due to the arguments above, a qualitative content analysis (hereby referred to as a QCA) has been adopted, to respond to the need of both an explicit and implicit level analysis.

According to Elo & Kyngäs (2008), when one employs a QCA the "aim is to attain a

condensed and broad description of the phenomenon, and the outcome of the analysis is concepts or categories describing the phenomenon" (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008, p 108). By using a QCA it is "possible to distil words into fewer content-related categories" (Ibid, p 108). In other words, you may study a large selection of texts, condensing it to find meaningful entities that can be categorized for generalized results of specific phenomena. What this entails for this paper, is that the key ideas are extracted from the documents in a systematic way, by condensing text and attributing different parts of the text into categories, based on meaningful entities found in the documents. This method, rather than the quantitative approach, allows for a deeper interpretation of the texts, as it is used to obtain the contents to identify prominent themes, ideas and patterns. While keeping the properties of distilled forms of explicit and transparent research, which a quantitative content analysis would have provided (Graneheim et al , 2017).

A QCA can either have an inductive or deductive approach. The inductive approach is suitable when the researcher intends to openly interpret the findings, based on the experiences or explanations of reality in the text, and is generally adapted when findings may be interpreted abstractly without presumptions of a model or theory (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). While a deductive QCA targets the materials contents in accordance with a model or template based on a theoretical background, with the intent to study specific elements in the text (Ibid). Since this paper intends to study key ideas (see Chart 1), a deductive qualitative content analysis has been adopted, as this approach is deemed appropriate when a preselected theory or model is examined. The deductive approach to a QCA, can also be referred to as a targeted content analysis, or concept driven analysis, as you move from a theory of ideas to concrete data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

According to Saldana (2015), a QCA is an adequate method when attempting to break down a text, to find ideas and overarching themes (Saldana, 2015). Therefore, one may use this method to separate the important wordings and parts of a text to study a specific phenomenon, and condense the data. This is done by adopting a system or model based on words or short phrases, that connects to a larger phenomenon; "in qualitative data analysis, a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes or 'translates' data" (Ibid, p.3). In other words, such a code, or entity, works as a title of a book or poem, defining it as a whole. These codes are therefore a great resource to find the ideas in a text, using keywords or short phrases to pinpoint the text into categories. Saldana also argues, when using a QCA you

follow a series of patterns, however; one must be careful not to ignore the data that does not fit into these patterns; "instead, you must account for these fragments of the text, and not let it stall your analysis" (Ibid, p 4). Graneheim et. al (2017) also touches upon this challenge using a deductive QCA; "what and how much is left over depends on the researcher's intentions when selecting the theoretical model" (Graneheim et. al, 2017, p.3). In other words, questions may be raised of model fitness if there is a large amount of left-over data. However, depending on the intention of research, this has more or less significance. According to Graneheim et. al (2017), if the purpose of the research is to verify a model or theory, this poses more of a concern, while if the intent is to simply study the data with the *help* of a preselected model, these concerns lose significance for validity of results (Ibid). As this paper will use a model based on a set of key ideas, rather than verify a theory or model, this can be argued as less of a problem for this paper. Therefore, when abnormalities have appeared insignificant due to the small portion of text, this has simply not been commented on.

Watt Boolsens' 7 step model

There are various ways to conduct a QCA, and Elo & Kyngäs argue that there are no systematic rules for analyzing the data, as the intent of the research dictates the approach of the examiner. However, there are three main phases the researcher has to undergo in both a deductive and inductive QCA; preparation, organizing and reporting (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). There are therefore three clear phases one has to account for. I have chosen to follow Watt Boolsen's seven step model for a QCA, which takes upon these phases and provides a clear set of guidelines for the analysis (Watt Boolsen, 2007). The first step (1) is to choose the material. This selection is governed by the purpose and tentative issues. Step two (2) is to describe how the material has been selected. These two steps are accounted for in the material selection part of this paper. The third step (3) establishes a framework for the analysis, in which a theory, or in this case the key ideas, where the most important variables for the analysis are present. These variables are shown in Chart 2 Analytical tool 1 in this paper. The variables consist of categories based on the elements relevant for migration legislative documents, and the key ideas from liberalism and realism (as shown in Chart 1) where 1 to 7 account for liberal ideas, while 2 to 8 for realist ideas. I developed these categories by using the definitions of liberalism and realism as argued for primarily by Zogata-Kusz (2012), Ericson (2009) and Viotti & Kauppi (1999). The fourth step (4) is to conduct a pilot study, a minor analysis on one of the materials to test the variables in the tool. Conducting such a study helped me adjust and update the codes to remain suitable for all the legislative

documents in question. This is also what Watt Boolsen defines as step five (5). The sixth step (6) is to perform the analysis on the entire material selection. This also requires repetition of analysing the texts, so the reliability is not lost. This was particularly time consuming for the larger legislative documents selected for this paper. The final step (7) follows, which is the reporting of the findings from the repeated analysis (Watt Boolsen, 2007).

The reporting of the findings is structured in such a way that each document is examined one by one. For simplicity's sake, each document is analyzed in the order that it was proposed by the Commission each year. This is not done in an attempt to examine how the prevailing ideas change throughout the two years, but simply due to the coherence of a chronological order. The text in the documents are broken down and given a code belonging to each of the subcategories (see analytical tool 1). The entities that are present in each document are systematically quoted throughout the reporting, to provide validity and a base for discussion. Due to the limits of the paper to account for all the entities found and allocated during the analysis, only the prominent patterns are systematically quoted. However, in order to demonstrate that a full analysis has been conducted, I have chosen to link to the full data set spreadsheet (based on the analytical tool) used during the QCA of the legislative documents. To see the full extent of the QCA, follow the link to the Google Drive Spreadsheet under appendices.

The QCA tool

For the QCA, a working model, or as I refer to it in this paper; an analytical tool, based on categories and subcategories compatible with the key ideas and migration legislative documents, has been created. The four categories were developed with the help of the dimensions as shown in Chart 1, and responds to elements relevant for legislative documents on migration; 1) *State & Individuals*, 2) *Humanism & Rights*, 3) *Security & Borders*, and lastly 4) *International actors & Cooperation*. These main categories consist of either four or two subcategories, where key ideas of liberalism and realism are accounted for. Subcategories in blue stand for key liberal ideas, while red accounts for the key ideas of realism. In the QCA spreadsheet, the subcategories are also color graded. The darker the blue and red color the assigned subcategory has (see example in Chart 2), the stronger is the presence of the idea in the text.

Analytical Tool 1: Categories and subcategories

| I. *State & Individuals*	II. *Humanism & Rights*	III. *Security & Borders*	IV. *International actors & Cooperation*
1.a The state has duties towards individuals	**3.a** Individual's situations	**5.a** Security for individuals	**7.a** International actors are of utmost importance for cooperation
1.b There is a collective responsibility for all individuals	**3.b** Safeguards for all individuals	**5.b** Border movement	
2.a Individuals have duties towards the state	**4.a** State's legal enforcement	**6.a** Security of state	**8.a** Cooperation with international actors in place when beneficial
2.b States have responsibility for its own individuals	**4.b** Rights dependent on group belonging	**6.b** Stronger border security	

Chart 2: Example of tool 1 employment

Text	Condensed	Code	Subcategory
Readmission of own nationals is an obligation under international law.	Third countries have obligations to readmit their nationals	Responsibility of own nationals	**2.b** States have responsibility for its own individuals
Those who fail the test of asylum face the prospect of return. Those who live a clandestine life inside Europe have a precarious existence and can easily fall prey to exploitation.	Those who do not get asylum, and those who are in vulnerable situations	Individual situations into account	**3.a** Individual's situations

The analytical landscape, its' axes and ideal corners

The results of which ideas prevail in each legislative response are further made clear by placing the analyzed documents into a second analytical tool. After the analysis, this paper has placed each document into this tool, to demonstrate which of the ideas are largely present. Therefore, if the majority of the documents fall above the dotted line to the right, it falls under the key ideas of liberalism, due to its stance on individual rights, collective responsibility and cooperation (Zogata-Kusz, 2012). While if it falls below the line to the left the document is leaning towards the key ideas of realism, as this theory is mainly concerned with cooperation when beneficial and securitization (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999). The finalized analytical tool can be found at the end of the reporting part of the analysis.

Analytical Tool 2: Two axes, two dimensions and four ideal corners
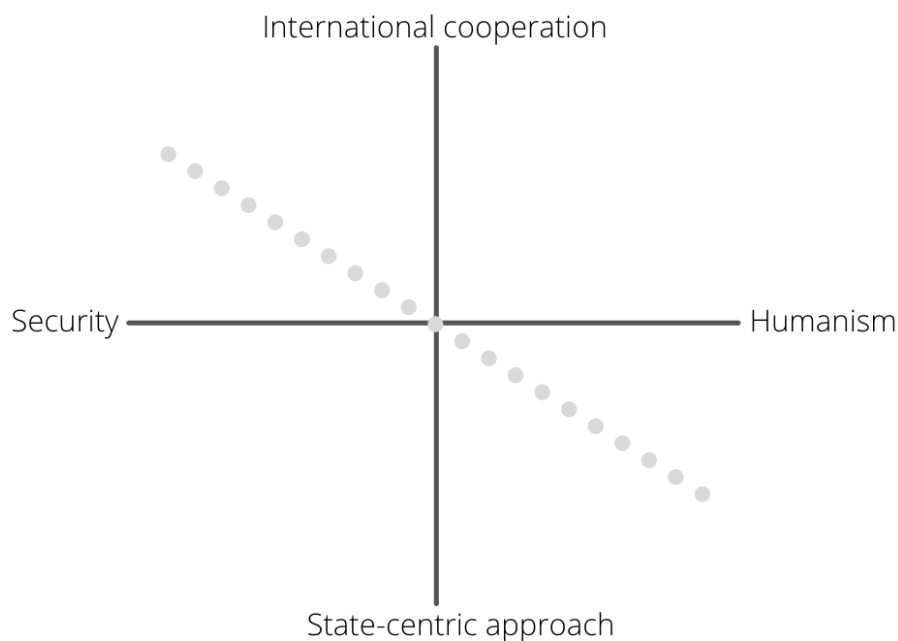
Material selection

As this paper studies the ideational leadership of the Commission, by looking into its legislative response to the surge in irregular migration in 2015 and 2016, it is for obvious reasons valid to consider only the Commission's legislative documents on migration. This means that this paper does not follow the policy-making process of the documents throughout the different EU institutions.

To narrow down the scope of research I, as mentioned, primarily study documents targeting irregular migration rather than all forms of migration. This is due to two main reasons, firstly; the intent of this research is to study how the Commission has legislatively responded to the surge in irregular migration that hit Europe, which exposed policy failures of the EU. Butt (2019) argues that by choosing a timeframe where major changes or crisis has hit, the examiner of ideational leadership has an easier time extracting the key ideas put forward by the responsible authorities (Butt, 2019). How the authorities choose to respond to a crisis thereby says a lot in regards to their ideational leadership as a whole, as this is where their leadership is put to a test, and the key ideas are therefore often more clearly present in the documents. As the migration flow to Europe during these years was fairly controversial to the Member States and the EU, due to irregular migration aspects (Scipioni, 2017), the EU attempted to strengthen its stance on irregular migration for any future similar crisis (European Commission, 2015). Therefore, I argue that narrowing the material selection to those concerned with combating irregular migration flow and its features, is a valid scope. The second reason for choosing solely irregular migration, is the simple notion of time limitation. Preferably, this paper would have broadened the scope of analysis to all documents by the Commission in regards to migration, however, this is deemed too time consuming.

When selecting the relevant documents for the analysis, I refer to the Commissions' Migration & Home Affairs webpage on legislative documents. Here the Commission links to directives, agendas and proposals responding to the issues of irregular migration, return and other features to these forms of migration flows, year by year (European Commission, 2021). This paper only examines the documents produced during the two year analysis time frame. In an attempt to narrow down the great selection of documents, I do not examine the documents in regards to specific countries, as relocation schemes for countries like Greece, but rather to the Union as a whole, such as the Return Action Plan. Documents solely concerned with progress reports on the implementation processes have also been excluded from this paper. The reasoning for the exclusion of documents is that they are considered either too technical and country specific, and not as relevant for the study of the ideational leadership in legislation as others. While they could be interesting additions to the analysis, it would also be too time- and space consuming, compared to the little benefit of including them in the analysis.

In order to avoid the time consumption of sifting through all documents produced during these two years to find those more relevant for irregular migration, as well as being able to narrow down the great selection, I have gone directly to the *European Agenda on Migration* (COM 2015/240). To the chapter where the Commission lists their priorities and key actions towards reducing the incentives for irregular migration. With the help of these key actions, I have been able to pick out legislative documents on the Migration and Home Affairs website that are concerned mostly with the listed actions:

* Addressing the root causes through development cooperation and humanitarian assistance.
* Making migration a core issue for EU delegations.
* An action plan on smuggling.
* Stronger action so that third countries fulfil their obligations to readmit their nationals.
* Adoption of a Return Handbook and monitoring of the implementation of the Return Directive.
* Reinforcement and amendment of the Frontex legal basis to strengthen its role on return. (COM 2015/240, p 10).

I have hereby been able to select ten documents that either address; cooperation and assistance in light of the root causes for migration, the EU's external action, migration smuggling, third country cooperation, return management, and lastly a document concerned with border management. Some documents, as one can imagine, touch upon multiple of these issues, and this selection also means exclusion of many other interesting aspects of the Commission's leadership. However, due to the grand amounts of documents, as well as the length of many of these, I have narrowed down my selection to what are considered some of the most important actions and developments to irregular migration by the European Commission during the years of 2015-16. Therefore, the timeframe of the months and dates where these forms of documents can be found as proposed by the Commission are from the 13th of May in 2015, up until the 7th of June in 2016.

The Legislative Documents

The first document in question is the *European Agenda on Migration*, produced by the Commission in 2015, as the immediate response to the migration flows. This agenda is the communication for the Commission to the other EU institutions on a new agenda in

regards to these movements, and has set the agenda for the proposals to come. I have in this document only analyzed the chapter accounting for the first pillar of managing migration; 'Reducing the incentives for irregular migration' (COM 2015/240). The second document examined is the 2015 *EU Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling* (COM 2015/285), to answer pressing issues of irregular migrants arriving through smugglers to the EU. The third examined document is from the second implementation package in 2015, the *Action Plan of Return* (COM 2015/453)*,* a plan on how to return irregular third country nationals from the Union. I have not examined the entire *Return Handbook,* as the plan is deemed sufficient as it touches upon the policies then comprehensively detailed in the Handbook.

Following documents examined are from the latter parts of 2015. Firstly, the *Joint Communication on Addressing the Refugee Crisis in Europe: The Role of EU External Action* (JOIN 2015/40), which addresses the root causes of the crisis and irregular migration to the EU externally and suggests responses to these. Secondly, the *Commission Decision on the establishment of a European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa* (C 2015/7293, which similarly addresses root causes of irregular migration, by establishing a fund for African countries. Thirdly, *the Commission recommendation for a* V*oluntary Humanitarian Admission Scheme with Tur*key (C 2015/9490), as a part of an EU joint action with Turkey on irregular migration routes and admissions.

The first examined legislative document produced in the year 2016 is a follow up on the last mentioned document, a communication from the Commission on *Next Operational Steps in EU-Turkey Cooperation in the Field of Migration* (COM 2016/166). The second document examined from this year is the Commission communication *Towards a Reform of the Common European Asylum System and Enhancing Legal Avenues to Europe* (COM 2016/197), that addresses irregular migration, promotes legal movement to the EU and suggests responses to the crisis. To touch upon some of the aspects of border legislations, I have in this paper chosen to examine the Commission communication of *Stronger and Smarter Information Systems for Borders and Security* (COM 2016/205). Despite the very technical aspects of this document, I deemed it interesting for the analysis to include one legislative document that specifically deals with aspects of border management, and smart systems introduced by the Commission. Lastly, the fourth and last document selected from the year 2016 is the Commission communication on *establishing a new Partnership*

Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration (COM 2016/385)*,* which is, as stated, a direct legislative document from the priorities set in the Agenda on Migration to establish a framework with third-countries on migration, and in particular to address the irregular migration flows to the EU.

Reporting of the analysis

As previously mentioned, I report on the results from the QCA on each individual document in a chronological order. The findings are presented by accounting for extracted entities and their assigned subcategories of ideas, by going through each of the categories as seen in analytical tool 1. The headings are color highlighted, indicating which set of ideas prevail in each category of the documents. Blue implies liberal, and red implies ideas rooted in realism, while grey signifies an equal distribution of ideas in that category.

1. **A European Agenda on Migration**

The only analyzed chapter in this document is the first pillar of managing migration; 'Reducing the incentives for irregular migration' (COM 2015/240, p7).

Distribution of ideas		
I. State & Individuals	3	2
II. Humanism & Rights	3	7
III. Security & Borders	1	1
IV. International actors & Cooperation	2	5
Total	9	14

I.   *State & Individuals*

Although limited results, the Agenda displays a few clear ideas in this category. Firstly, it demonstrates liberal ideas of the need for collective responsibility of irregular migrants, and calls upon the obligation of the EU to assist refugees (Ibid, p8). It also displays entities of willingness to assist third-countries, while promoting a sense of solidarity in regards to migrants processes. Whereas there were no findings in regards to duties of migrants to the EU, the QCA revealed signs of realist ideas on two occasions when it is stated that the EU needs to ensure that "third countries fulfil

their international obligation to take back their own nationals residing irregularly in Europe" (Ibid, p 9). This suggests a country's responsibility to its own individuals. The results in this category indicate a domination of key liberal ideas.

II. *Humanism & Rights*

Key ideas of placing the individual in the center is expressed in the Agenda by taking the irregular migrants vulnerable situation into account, by addressing the exploitation of migrants and their vulnerable positions, as well as expressing the need for fundamental rights safeguards in return and border management of irregular migrants (Ibid, p 8-9). Although, there are multiple references, whilst more lightly present, to the EU's legal enforcement. Both in regards to calls for legal action by the EU, as well as the strengthening of the tools at hand of the EU Agencies, such as Frontex in return and readmission; " the Commission will propose to amend the Frontex legal basis to strengthen its role on return" (Ibid, p 10). There is also a clear indication of the subcategory 4.b on rights connected to group belonging, where it is stated that irregulars have "no legal right"(Ibid, 8) to remain in the EU. Irregular migrants are thereby singled out by the Commission as not possessing the same rights.

III. *Security & Borders*

There is no indication of ideas on relaxed borders and movements, however, there are liberal ideas present in regards to placing the security of migrants in the center, rather than the security of the EU. An example of this; "action to fight criminal networks of smugglers and traffickers is first and foremost a way to prevent the exploitation of migrants by criminal networks" (Ibid, p 8). Although, there is a key idea present also calling for stronger border security measures (Ibid, p 9), suggesting realist ideas are present. The results indicate an equal share of ideas in this category.

IV. *International actors & Cooperation*

In regards to cooperation with international actors, the Agenda stresses twice that third-countries and civil society are crucial for EU cooperation (Ibid, 8). However, the idea of cooperation when beneficial to the EU are by far dominating in this legislative document, as it is suggested that the EU has "much to be gained" (Ibid, 8), from cooperation with third-countries such as Turkey. The idea of cooperation when it is beneficial for the Union is thereby given more space in the Agenda set by the

Commission.

2. **EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling (2015 - 2020)**

The document proposed by the Commission to migrant smuggling has been analyzed in its entirety.

Distribution of ideas		
I. State & Individuals	4	4
II. Humanism & Rights	7	12
III. Security & Borders	5	6
IV. International actors & Cooperation	4	10
Total	20	32

I. *State & Individuals*

The results from the QCA on action against migration smuggling suggest multiple entities on collective responsibility for all individuals. Call for solidarity with the migrants trying to to reach the EU, is present on at least two occasions in this document. While meaningful entities suggesting duties of the EU is only extracted once, this idea is deemed clearly present due to the wording 'should'; "the EU should step up efforts to provide smuggled migrants, in particular vulnerable groups such as children and women, with assistance and protection" (COM 2015/285, p 7). However, obligations of irregular migrants, such as the need to present information and cooperate with EU agencies, were found in two places during the QCA. The results also indicate that the Commission displays ideas from the subcategory 2.b, on states responsibility for own nationals; "EU should also make stronger efforts to convince third countries to take back their own nationals that are irregularly present in Europe" (COM 2015/285, p8).

II. *Humanism & Rights*

The entities falling under the subcategory of the EU's legal action and tools are dominating in this category by the Commission. Perhaps not surprisingly as it was proposed with the intention for "a stronger European response to migrant smuggling" (Ibid, p 2). The tools at EU's disposal, such as agencies Frontex and Europol, and call

for efforts to "crack down on migrant smuggling" (Ibid, 2), by enhancing EU's abilities, are constantly referenced by the Commission. Subcategories on safeguards for all the migrants, or their vulnerable situations taken into account, are present on very few occasions in this document. The Commission hereby displays domination of key realist ideas in this category.

III.   *Security & Borders*

Ideas in regards to call for protection of individuals were present on at least five occasions, as the Commission stresses priority of "securing the safety of people" (Ibid, p 3). Key ideas of placing the security of individuals in the center are thereby displayed by the Commission in this document. However, these are considered fairly weak. The ideas for enhancing border security, both to protect the EU itself and promoting security measures in general, are still dominating in regards to this category by the Commission, as it constantly refers to the need for; "promoting security measures and adequate controls by public institutions" (Ibid, p 7), and integrating "border management systems" (Ibid, p 9).

IV.   *International actors & Cooperation*

On four occasions, ideas solely expressing the importance of international actors for cooperation were extracted. Turkey was one partner referenced by the Commission, as an important actor due to its common challenges during the crisis (Ibid, p 9). However, entities found belonging to the idea of cooperation when beneficial to the EU itself were extracted noticeably more in this document. An example of this is when the Commission expresses that cooperation will be put in place with third-countries where most of the irregular migrants are originating from. This paper would argue that this rationing in legislation suggests that the Commission expresses cooperation with international actors when deemed beneficial for the EU to do so.

3. **EU Action Plan on return**

The entire document on the action plan has been analyzed using the QCA tool. It demonstrates some of the clearest ideas extracted during the analysis of all legislative documents.

Distribution of ideas		
I. State & Individuals	6	15
II. Humanism & Rights	8	11
III. Security & Borders	0	19
IV. International actors & Cooperation	1	14
Total	20	32

I. *State & Individuals*

The Commission displays clear ideas in regards to responsibility in this document, mostly in regards to third-country responsibility for their own citizens. Such as the need for "those countries on the readmission of their nationals present irregularly in the EU" (COM 2015/453 p 9). The presence of realist ideas such as irregular migrants obligations to cooperate on leave, presenting ID documents, and provide information to the EU are by far dominating in this document, over the EU's obligation to assist migrants during a time of crisis. The Commission's ideas in this document are clear in regards to the need for irregular migrants duties to the EU, otherwise they are considered at risk of absconding. Although there were some entities suggesting liberal ideas, such as the obligation of the EU to assist in protection of migrants, the results indicate an obvious domination of key realist ideas in this category.

II. *Humanism & Rights*

While there are multiple entities present in the document in regards to the need for safeguards for the irregular migrants in the return process; "safeguards to protect the rights of returnees, and enable return to be carried out in a humane and proportionate manner" (Ibid, p 4), these are overshadowed in this document by the Commission expressing clear ideas indicating (what I have chosen to call) conditional rights. The document clarifies that there are differentiated rights depending on whether you are an irregular staying migrant, where there are risks of absconding into the EU, and migrants with a refugee status. By calling for the identification of these migrants as "those who are returnable" (Ibid, p 8), and on multiple occasions stating that they "have no legal right to stay in the EU" (Ibid, p 9). Key ideas of realism in regards to rights being connected to which group one belongs to, are hereby dominating when the Commission proposes legislative documents on how to return irregular, or

"illegally" (Ibid, p 5) staying third-country nationals in 2015. Ideas of EU's enhanced legal action and tools are also deemed fairly present in this document.

III.   *Security & Borders*

Due to the nature of this document, perhaps it comes as no surprise that key ideas of liberalism in regards to relaxed border movements were not extracted during the QCA. However, there were also no key ideas found belonging to the subcategory 5.a, placing the security of migrants central. This gives this paper yet another indication of which ideas dominate when the Commission responds to policy drawbacks in regards to irregular migration to the Union. There are multiple entities indicating the need for security of the EU, and that this is considered a priority. This is expressed by referring to some migrants as exposing risks to the EU due to their "criminal records" (Ibid, p 6) and risks of "absconding"(Ibid, 8). Therefore the Commission also calls for risk analysis. It is noticeable from the results that the Commission presses on the need to "scale up" (Ibid, 8) on return management and border security measures, to avoid the entrance of irregular migrants. It encourages Member States to use "detention" (Ibid, p 4), referring to detention centers by borders, as a last resort to avoid irregular migrants absconding into the EU. In other words, the QCA predominantly displays ideas rooted in those of realism, as the interests of the EU are always central.

IV.   *International actors & Cooperation*

Once again the QCA demonstrates a clear domination of ideas relevant for realism in cooperation. While one condensed entity was prescribed general importance of international actors, 7.a, due to its nature of stressing cooperation with governments and non-governmental actors on return (Ibid, p 4), at least fourteen entities on cooperation were given the subcategory 8.a, beneficial cooperation for the EU. While these were deemed somewhat weakly present, there are also entities found giving a clear indication of this idea; "boosting cooperation on return and readmission with the main countries of origin and transit of irregular migrants is essential for increasing rates of return" (Ibid, p 10). The Commission states throughout the document that cooperation with main countries will decrease irregular migration to the EU. Because readmission of these migrants to their origin is "easier" (Ibid, p 11), when there is an agreement and cooperation in place. I argue that the Commission expresses

cooperation with international actors when the EU itself has something to gain, such as lowering irregular migration flows.

4. **Addressing the Refugee Crisis in Europe: The Role of EU External Action**

This legislative document by the Commission, in regards to strengthening the EU's role in external action to manage the refugee crisis and irregular migration flow to the Union, has been analyzed in its entirety.

Distribution of ideas		
I. State & Individuals	18	1
II. Humanism & Rights	5	4
III. Security & Borders	1	6
IV. International actors & Cooperation	4	10
Total	26	27

I.   *State & Individuals*

The results of the entities distributed across the subcategories suggest prevailing key ideas of liberalism. While there are multiple entities stressing the obligation of the EU to assist migrants and refugees in need, there is only one entity found that was considered belonging to the idea of irregular migrants obligation to the Union. The subcategory with by far the most assigned entities is the one stressing solidarity towards migrants, especially in those countries of conflict, on multiple levels; "this includes European Union support in areas such as growth and job creation, peace and security, human rights and good governance for regions and countries where refugee flows originate" (JOIN 2015/40 p 4). The QCA therefore suggests that the Commission expresses the need for collective responsibility towards migrants, when responding to EU migration policy failures in 2015.

II. *Humanism & Rights*

Similarly, the QCA results indicate liberal ideas as predominantly present in this category. There are multiple references to the vulnerable position of irregular migrants, and the Commission seemingly takes the individual situation of migrants into account when addressing the need for external action to the crisis in 2015, such

as; "the Commission is providing humanitarian and development assistance to vulnerable migrant population stranded in Libya" (Ibid, p 7). While there are realist ideas present, in regards to the legal tools and actions being enhanced by the Commission, there are no entities found that could be considered belonging to grouped- or conditional rights.

III.   *Security & Borders*

Key ideas of placing security of migrants in the center of action was only found during the QCA on one occasion, while there were multiple accounts stressing the need for border protection developments and security; "development of an integrated border management in line with EU policies, in terms of land and sea border security and surveillance and customs' controls enforcement" (Ibid, p 6). This is often referenced in regards to the increased flow of migrants to the EU through Turkey as well as from Northern African regions. Therefore, this paper finds that the Commission expresses more realist ideas in regards to security of the EU's borders in this document.

IV.   *International actors & Cooperation*

This category is accounting for the largest number of entities. Perhaps not surprisingly due to the document's nature of addressing the EU's external dimension. However, while only one entity was deemed belonging to the key idea 7.a, sixteen of the entities were assigned as belonging to the realist ideas of cooperation when beneficial to the own 'state'. The Commission expresses the need for cooperation and agreements especially with countries where most of the irregular migrants to the EU are originating from, such as; "delegations in key countries of transit and origin are being reinforced" (Ibid, p 12). Cooperation with, and general aid to, is also suggested by the Commission as focused on where there is a need to decrease the migration flow to the EU. I thereby argue that the Commission expresses ideas of cooperation with third parties when it is considered solely beneficial.

5. **Decision on the establishment of a European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa**

This analyzed document is the Commission's final decision on a joint trust fund for displaced persons in Africa. It has been analyzed in its entirety for this paper, however; few meaningful entities were extracted due to the documents' technical nature of budget drafting and reference to regulations. Although, interesting results were found.

Distribution of ideas		
I. State & Individuals	8	-
II. Humanism & Rights	1	1
III. Security & Borders	-	-
IV. International actors & Cooperation	3	8
Total	11	10

I. *State & Individuals*

This legislative document displays ideas of solely liberal base in this category, as no subcategories belonging to realism were assigned. The Commission expresses, throughout the document, ideas pointing to the EU's obligation to assist migrants in distress, and those lacking protection in these regions, through humanitarian aid. This suggests to this paper that liberal ideas of duties of the state to all individuals are present, as well as the call for solidarity and collective responsibility. As the Commission calls for increasing its "humanitarian aid and development assistance to refugees and migrants across the region" (C 2015/7293 p 2).

II. *Humanism & Rights*

The QCA did not come across ideas in regards to safeguards for migrants or rights connected to group belonging, however; the vulnerable situation of migrants in African regions are taken into account in this document. This is displayed by briefing on the increased vulnerability of irregular migrants, especially those "exploited due to trafficking" (Ibid, p 2). The analysis also found an entity in regards to the Commission expressing increased needs of EU legal actions and tools in external dimensions to the crisis, suggesting a slight presence of realist ideas in this response.

III. *Security & Borders*

During the QCA of this paper, I did not find any meaningful entities belonging to ideas of issues of borders and security expressed by the Commission in this document.

IV. *International actors & Cooperation*

I found in this paper that in regards to cooperation and other actors, the Commission expresses ideas in line with those of realism when proposing a joint fund for African countries in order to address migration influx. Although ideas of mutual gain from cooperation and crucial importance of international actors were found, the QCA exposes that the Commission displays ideas of cooperation mostly when the EU itself has something to benefit from it. Similarly aid is suggested when, and only when, actors, such as third countries, agree to cooperate on return of irregular migrants. Enhancing cooperation is thereby encouraged by the Commission to limit the influx of migrants to the EU; "development cooperation already contributes to a large extent to tackling the root causes of migration" (Ibid, 6).

6. **Communication on a voluntary humanitarian admission scheme with Turkey**

This document is the first proposal in regards to the Commission's action for a Joint Action Plan with Turkey (European Commission, 2015). It was analyzed in its entirety, however; the budget drafting of expenditures in the scheme was not, due to its appendix-like nature.

Distribution of ideas		
I. State & Individuals	10	4
II. Humanism & Rights	6	3
III. Security & Borders	4	4
IV. International actors & Cooperation	6	8
Total	26	19

I. *State & Individuals*

The results from the QCA demonstrates a clear domination of the subcategories accounting for the key ideas of liberalism in this category. Especially in regards to

ideas of the need for collective responsibility towards all individuals, including irregular migrants. The Commission expresses these ideas by calling upon; "all Member States as well as associated states should show solidarity by voluntarily admitting certain numbers of displaced people under the scheme" (C 2015/9490 p 9). I have during the QCA interpreted these appeals by the Commission as ideas of displaying collective responsibility of irregular migrants, as it calls upon solidarity in "protection to displaced persons" (Ibid, p 8). However, there are some entities extracted accounting for realist ideas of these individuals' duties towards the EU; "candidates for humanitarian admission should be informed of their rights and obligations" (Ibid, p 5). Suggesting that the Commission proposes obligations of irregular migrants towards the EU.

II. *Humanism & Rights*

Similarly, the results from this category indicate a domination of ideas expressed by the Commission, as liberal. An example of this is placing the individual situation in the center of reform, taking the situation of the irregular migrants' vulnerable positions into account. Same goes for the pressing need of safeguards for all migrants in the readmission scheme and functions as suggested by the Commission. The ideas of equal fundamental safeguards are given space in this document for; "managed, safe and dignified arrival of such persons in place of dangerous and irregular migration" (Ibid, p 2). Conditional rights were only extracted twice during the analysis, as it was in regards to admitted migrants; "they are only entitled to the rights attached to protection in the State of admission" (Ibid, p 6).

III. *Security & Borders*

Limited results were found in regards to security and borders, but suggests an equal distribution across the subcategories. The Commission places the security of migrants in the center, by pressing on "humanitarian admission" of vulnerable persons, and referring to migrants in "need of international protection" (Ibid, p 4). While there are no major results indicating need for security of the EU, the subcategory accounting for border security enhancement was attributed to a few entities, calling for strengthened security checks and border control mechanisms.

IV. *International actors & Cooperation*

The Commission does display multiple ideas of mutual beneficiaries by cooperating with international actors such as NGOs, UNHCR, and especially Turkey. However, the ideas of cooperation when suggested are especially beneficial to the EU itself do slightly prevail in this document. The Commission, for example, suggests Member States join the scheme with Turkey, in order to decrease the numbers of irregular migrants to the EU (Ibid, p 6). The situation of Turkey is not as noticeable in this regard.

7. **Next Operational Steps in EU-Turkey Cooperation in the Field of Migration**

This legislative document is the first in the analysis from the year 2016, and is the follow-up to the action plan between EU and Turkey (European Commission, 2016). The document was analyzed in its entirety.

Distribution of ideas		
I. State & Individuals	6	1
II. Humanism & Rights	13	4
III. Security & Borders	2	2
IV. International actors & Cooperation	6	6
Total	27	13

I. *State & Individuals*

The Commission displays ideas in correlation with the subcategory of collective responsibility in this document. As the previous proposal on steps in cooperation with Turkey, solidarity towards irregular migrants by cooperating to protect those in need, are given special attention by the Commission. This paper takes upon this result as the Commission expressing key ideas of liberalism towards all individuals, not just its own. realist ideas in regards to obligations of irregular migrants to cooperate with EU authorities are only present on one occasion, and deemed fairly weak.

II. *Humanism & Rights*

Migrants' situations are taken into account by the Commission throughout this document. There are multiple accounts of the need to assess the situation of each individual, in order to provide international protection; "in particular as regards the

individual assessment of applications" (COM 2016/166 p 4). The irregular migrants are thereby placed central. Likewise, safeguards for irregular migrants are given a fair amount of space in this document by the Commission, as it presses on the need to always respect the fundamental rights charter, and principles such as the one of non-refoulement; "respect all applicable international humanitarian law rules" (Ibid, p 6). realist ideas of rights connected to group belonging are present in this document only on a few occasions when the Commission differentiates rights of migrants considered in need of international protection and "those who are not" (Ibid, p 2).

III.   *Security & Borders*

While the QCA did not come across entities in regards to borders, neither call for free movement nor enhanced border security, the security issues of the EU, as well as need for security of migrants, were both given as much space in this document by the Commission. Increasing the security of the EU is definitely a concern, as the Commission expresses the risks of irregular migration flows to the Union (Ibid, p 2), suggesting placement of EU security central. However, the Commission also displays ideas of security of especially irregular migrants as central objectives for this document, as it "aims to replace, quickly, irregular flows of migrants travelling in dangerous conditions" (Ibid p 5). In this category, the Commission expresses an even set of ideas, to policy drawbacks in 2016.

IV.   *International actors & Cooperation*

Similarly, is the case for the category on international actors cooperation. There is an even distribution of ideas between the two subcategories, six for 7.a and six for 8.a. It is clear that the Commission demonstrates the importance of cooperation with international actors such as "UN and UNHCR, IOM" (Ibid, p 6) in their expertise for humane migration management. Suggesting key liberal ideas, in regards to cooperation in the face of failures exposed in 2015-16. However, seemingly cooperation when beneficial is also present in this document, especially when the Commission references how much the EU has to gain itself for cooperating with Turkey on issues such as return. As agreements are referenced as "linked to the returns of all new irregular migrants and asylum seekers from Greek islands to Turkey" (Ibid, p 5).

8. **Towards a Reform of the Common European Asylum System and Enhancing Legal Avenues to Europe**

This document is part of the Commission's attempt to reform the common EU system on asylum, by proposing suggestions for legal avenues to Europe and disincentives to irregular migration (COM 2016/197). The entirety of the document has been analyzed.

Distribution of ideas		
I. State & Individuals	12	5
II. Humanism & Rights	15	22
III. Security & Borders	4	14
IV. International actors & Cooperation	-	3
Total	31	44

I. *State & Individuals*

Although the results from the overall QCA indicate that ideas rooted in realism prevail in this document, the results in this category suggest that there are still numerous key liberal ideas present. Subcategories accounting for the ideas of EU's obligation towards helping all migrants, and call for collective responsibility of people, are prevailing. The Commission displays willingness for the EU to "continue to stand steadfast in meeting their legal and moral commitment to those who need protection from war and persecution" (Ibid, p 2), suggesting both call for collective responsibility and obligations. While a few entities were extracted as belonging to the subcategory 2.a on individuals obligations towards the EU, especially in regards to the need for irregular migrants to comply and cooperate with EU regulations, these are limited.

II. *Humanism & Rights*

While fifteen entities were extracted as belonging to the subcategories of safeguards for all migrants, such as references to; "respect for the international obligations enshrined in the EU Charter of fundamental rights" (Ibid, p 10). Eleven entities were deemed belonging to 4.a, and another eleven to subcategory 4.b of realist rooted ideas. The Commission proposes stronger mandates and operations of EU agencies

and tools on multiple occasions, while also suggesting the need to differentiate between which migrants are entitled to which rights; "the Commission will carefully examine the need to adapt the level of rights in order to reduce both undue pull factors and secondary movement" (Ibid, 10). Such as reference to who receives freedom of movement and not; "they do not in principle have the right to move to another Member State" (Ibid, 12).

III. *Security & Borders*

This is the first document, during the analysis, where key ideas on relaxed border movements are expressed by the Commission. The Commission seemingly places legal avenues of migration to the EU in a positive light; "the EU will also need to attract talents and skills from abroad to remain a global competitive player" (Ibid, p 17). However, ideas for increased border security measures, are still prevailing as a need to; "reducing irregular flows to and within Europe, and protecting our external borders" (Ibid, p 3). I have deemed that in this document, the Commission tends to place ideas of protecting the EU and its interests above protecting migrants.

IV. *International actors & Cooperation*

No entities were found for the subcategory of the importance of international actors (7.a), and although entities of cooperation when beneficial to the EU (8.a) were limited and deemed weakly present, they were still extracted on a few occasions, such as encouraged by the Commission with third countries, when it limits migration flow to the EU.

9. **Stronger and Smarter Information Systems for Borders and Security**

This document is approached slightly differently. I wanted to include at least one document from the Border Package, as well as smart systems, by the Commission (European Commission, 2015), but saw little benefit in long technical documents with little meaningful entities. This document was selected to respond to both these needs, but due to its fairly mechanical nature of appendices, the results are limited. However, still indicating some key ideas expressed by the Commission to drawbacks in border policies these years.

Distribution of ideas		
I. State & Individuals	-	1
II. Humanism & Rights	10	13
III. Security & Borders	5	18
IV. International actors & Cooperation	2	-
Total	17	32

I. *State & Individuals*

No ideas could be detected as belonging to subcategories 1.a and b. Similarly, no entities were extracted as rooted in realism, except for one in regards to the EU's obligation towards its own citizens; "EU citizens expect external border controls on persons to be effective, to allow effective management of migration and to contribute to internal security" (COM 2016/205 p 2). Suggesting the Commission assumes a responsibility towards the citizens of Europe, and therefore calling upon measures to protect them.

II. *Humanism & Rights*

Safeguards for all, especially in regards to data protection on fingerprints and personal information, are present throughout this document; "bearing in mind the necessary data protection safeguards" (Ibid, p 9). The Commission presses on the need to manage each migrant equally in this border system. Perhaps not surprisingly, due to the subject of this document, key ideas in regards to placing the legal action and tools of the EU in the center are prevailing in this category. The Commission expresses that there are needs for entry/exit systems on an EU-wide level, and references different agencies and tools useful for this, such as Europol (Ibid, 11).

III. *Security & Borders*

While there are entities present indicating ideas of relaxed border movements of some migrants in this document, the key ideas of realism of border security measures are by far dominating; "to better protect its external borders and enhance its internal security" (Ibid, p 20). However, the results also suggest that the Commission places the security of migrants central in some contexts, especially when explaining the system's ability to help prevent trafficking and exploitation of migrant children (Ibid, p 4).

IV.   *International actors & Cooperation*

The QCA did not come across any entities for subcategory 8.a on beneficial cooperation, but did find two entities of importance of international actors as rooted in liberalism, expressed by the Commission; "crucial actors in the multi-agency cooperation" (Ibid, p 15). However, the results indicate very weak presence of these, and the findings are considered limited.

10. **Communication on establishing a new Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration**

The last document analyzed in this paper is from June 7th in 2016, and is a communication from the Commission on establishing a framework for partnerships with third countries. The QCA was adopted for the entire document.

Distribution of ideas		
I. State & Individuals	19	2
II. Humanism & Rights	3	6
III. Security & Borders	4	6
IV. International actors & Cooperation	2	17
Total	28	31

I.   *State & Individuals*

Like the majority of the documents analyzed, key ideas of liberalism, in regards to the EU's responsibility towards all migrants, are prevailing over ideas of state responsibility towards their own citizens. While two entities were extracted as belonging to this idea, 2.b, these were far less than the fourteen found for 1.b. The Commission states that the international community should show solidarity with and assist migrants in crisis; "reinforce the long-term capacity and effectiveness of the international system to deal with the movement of refugees and migrants in a spirit of burden sharing and solidarity" (COM 2016/385 p 12). As well as displaying key ideas of the EU's duties towards migrants; "the EU has a duty to contribute its share in helping displaced persons in clear need of international protection" (Ibid, p 12).

II.   *Humanism & Rights*

Three entities were deemed belonging to safeguards for all migrants; "all of this work must take place in a context which fully respects international law and fundamental rights" (Ibid, p 2). While six entities were found, placing the legal actions and tools by the EU in the center of legislation; "all available instruments and resources will be deployed in a more targeted, coordinated, flexible and rapid manner "(Ibid, p 9). The results from the QCA therefore suggest that the Commission expresses safeguards for all. However, it gives key ideas of legal enforcement and tools, more space when legislatively responding to the policy failures during the crisis.

III.   *Security & Borders*

The QCA indicates mixed results in these subcategories, as the Commission displays almost an equal distribution of the key ideas in regards to whether it places the security of migrants, or the EU itself, in the center of the legislation. While it calls for the need to relax border movements of legal pathways to Europe (Ibid, p 5), it also pushes for border security measures and risk assessments to protect against threats to the EU (Ibid, p 4). The overall results show slight domination of realist influenced ideas on security and borders. However, protecting the security of migrants is still explained as of "primary importance" (Ibid, p 15).

IV.   *International actors & Cooperation*

This legislative document is primarily in regards to the EU's relations with third countries, and therefore comes as no surprise that this category holds the majority of the entities extracted. Although some entities were deemed difficult to prescribe to either the ideas of mutual gain-, or cooperation when beneficial, the general idea of EU cooperation when profitable, is prevailing in regards to the Commission's legislative proposal on partnership with third-countries. Seventeen entities were assigned to the subcategory 8.a, and the pattern is that cooperation with these parties is encouraged by the Commission when the EU benefits. The Commission, on multiple occasions, refers to the 'special relationships' between Member States and third parties as something to be 'exploited' in order to manage migration to the EU; "special relationships that Member States may have with third countries, reflecting political, historic and cultural ties fostered through decades of contacts should also be

exploited to the full for the benefit of the EU" (Ibid, p 8). Indicating demand for cooperation with international actors when it is deemed as profitable to the EU as a whole. These entities are by far prevailing in this document, and thereby outweigh liberal ideas of cooperation for mutual gain.

Completed Analytical Tool 2

Each document is placed into the analytical tool 2; the analytical landscape, its axes and four ideal corners, representing key ideas of the two IR theories. The tool displays which ideas are mainly expressed and prevail in each document by the Commission. Three documents above the dotted line, indicated in blue, contain majority liberal ideas, such as; equal rights, collective responsibility and cooperation with international actors. While the seven documents, indicated in red below the line, express prevailing ideas of realism, such as; enhanced border security, legal tools, as well as self-centric cooperation. The documents are all placed across each dimension depending on the number of entities, and strong or weak presence of each idea, found during the QCA.
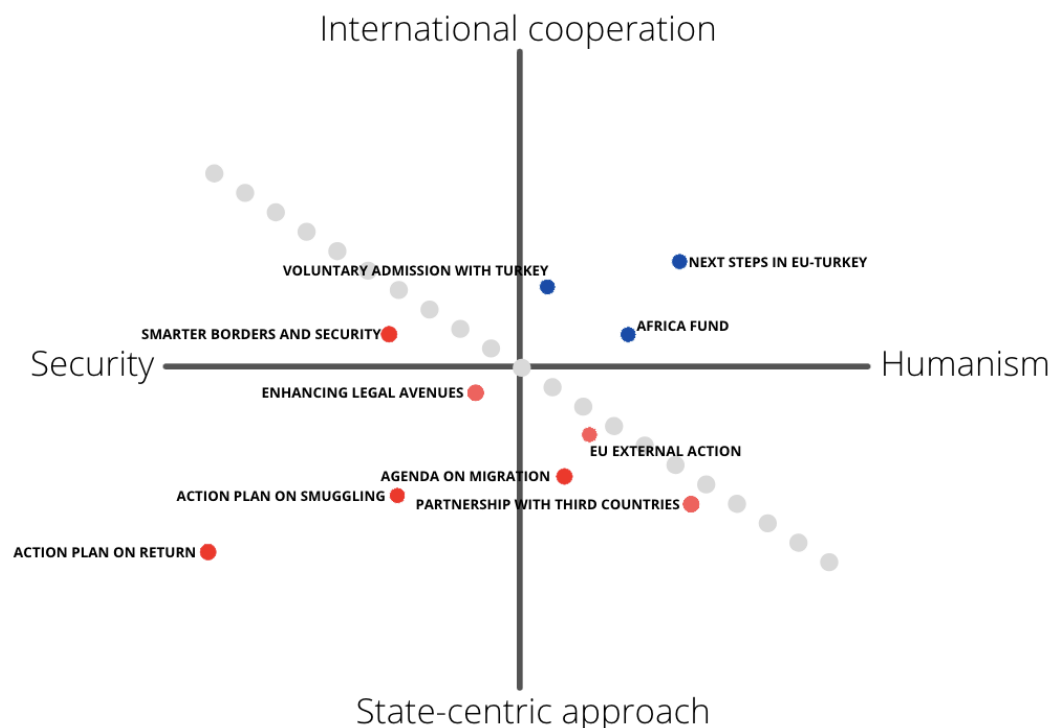
Discussion

In this part of the paper I firstly reflect upon the methodology adapted and the key ideas. Secondly, I discuss the results from the analysis, relating the paper to previous literature, and answer this papers' research question. Thirdly, I follow this discussion with a conclusion of the paper, to account for its relevance and suggest future contributions on the topic.

Reflection on methodology and key ideas

I have in this paper used Watt Boolsens' 7 step model for a deductive, also called targeted QCA, to extract meaningful entities in the legislative documents (Watt Boolsen, 2007). As I was interested in finding a set of specific ideas, based on the two IR theories, an inductive approach was not deemed relevant. During the analysis, I realized that this methodological approach was a suitable choice compared to other qualitative methods, due to the large amount of text and its variation in sizes. This approach therebt added to the feasibility of the research. A QCA was also considered early on in this paper, as it is the same approach to ideas in legislative documents as adapted by Stiller in her ideational leadership research (Stiller, 2010).

After the initial pilot study was performed on one the larger documents; *the EU action plan on return* (COM 2015/453), I was able to adapt both the codes and the subcategories to operate well across the documents, while still taking the key ideas into account. The 7 step model proved to be a valuable asset in structuring the analysis, and breaking down the text into condensed versions (Watt Boolsen, 2007). However, the repeated analysis on the texts, to provide reliable results, was fairly time-consuming, and led to the exclusion of some legislative documents by the Commission I would have liked to include, such as the *Return Handbook* (C 2017/6505) and legislations in the *Border Package* (European Commission, 2015). There was also a need to slightly change codes throughout the analysis, to work across such varied actions to irregular migration. An example of this is the code for subcategory 3.a, on individuals' situations. Initially entities were coded as 'irregular migrants vulnerable situation', but after multiple readings I deemed it relevant to name it 'individual situations into account' as it worked across the documents and could include more text. It also took liberalisms' ideas of placing individuals central, (Ericson, 2009), into account. Once these changes were finalized the analytical tool proved a valuable asset, and the documents were

smoothly placed into the analytical tool 2.

The key ideas of liberalism and realism, as shown in Chart 1 of this paper, were not always easy to distinguish during the QCA. For example, when the Commission expresses ideas of the need to protect irregular migrants, and in the same paragraph differentiate between the rights of migrants, it is difficult to decide which code applies. However, due to this method's ability to condense the texts, these could be separated and coded as two entities (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). This is also why some pages in the spreadsheet have more entities than others. The employment of these ideas in regards to the concepts, such as 'state' and 'international actors', were decided upon before the analysis, which proved adequate during the QCA. Although, it was a challenge applying ideas of 'state' as referring to the entire Union, which was to be expected. When the Commission referred to Member State responsibility and ultimately EU internal cooperation, I had difficulties determining whether these are in regards to cooperation or as interests of the EU. However, as I in this paper defined 'state' as standing for the EU as a whole (due to the Commission proposing legislations for the interest of the Union), as well as collective action of Member States with the help of the EU, this was ultimately not a big issue during the QCA, and the concept of 'state' equals EU, was employed without too many hesitations.

The QCA also proved that these two IR theories are indeed workable for migration legislative documents, as both have strong ideas on how to view topics such as responsibility, cooperation and rights on an international level (Zogata-Kusz, 2012). All present in the Commission legislative response to irregular migration. Therefore, the dimensions as seen in Chart 1, did play an important part in making the categories and subcategories for this papers' analysis. This helped structure the analysis and the reporting of the results, as there was a presence of almost all categories for the majority of the documents. These ideas are, as discussed, ideals of political nature (Swedberg, 2017), and therefore keeps the aspects of political and policy as described lacking in EU leadership studies (Tömmel & Verdun, 2017). Overall, choosing these international relations theories as a base for the ideas extracted, when the Commission responded to policy failures exposed by the migration crisis in 2015-26, were indeed a viable choice proven efficient for the QCA.

Reflection on findings and answer to research question

The purpose of the study has been to examine the form of ideational leadership the European Commission displays. This was done by studying which key ideas prevail in legislative documents by the Commission, when responding to policy failures, exposed by the surge in irregular migration to the EU in 2015-2016. The findings from the QCA in the reporting of results suggest both clear and varied results, with a general prevailing of ideas rooted in realism, such as; cooperation when deemed beneficial to the EU, call for enhanced EU and border security, differentiated rights depending on what group of migrants is referenced. However, with clear liberal ideas present in the majority of the documents, such as; collective responsibility towards all migrants, safeguards for all and EU obligation to assist migrants (see Google spreadsheet).

Firstly, while it is clear that documents tend to fall into the dimension of ideas belonging to those of realism, the majority of them are fairly scattered across the analytical tool 2. In the reporting part of this paper and tool 2, one can see that documents such as *The Role of EU External Action* (JOIN 2015/40) and *establishing a new Partnership Framework with third countries on Migration* (COM 2016/385)*,* both display clear ideas of need for increased border security, enhanced EU legal enforcement and placing the interests of the EU central in cooperation. However, the QCA results also indicate strong presence of liberal ideas in the categories accounting for collective responsibility and the vulnerable situation of irregular migrants. So while the entities indicate domination of the Commission placing ideas of interests and security of the EU as central, documents like these seemingly take the individual situation of migrants into account, with many entities almost pushing it over the line to the liberal dimension of the axis. What this entails for this paper, is that I need to take into account that although ideas rooted in realism do tend to prevail when the Commission legislatively responds to drawbacks in its policy towards irregular migration, it still places liberal ideas on humanism and rights high on the agenda.

Secondly, the findings suggest that barely three documents have prevailing liberal rooted ideas. In the finalized analytical tool 2, one may see how these were placed according to the ideal corners. These are especially in regards to the Commission's proposal on cooperation with Turkey, and funds to African countries of irregular migrants origin. What they have in common is the clear presence of ideas where the Commission pushes for the EU's obligation to assist irregular migrants, placing the security and protection of migrants at

the top of legislation (see Google spreadsheet). However, as one may see in the reporting of the results, the entities found in these documents are very limited compared to others. The reason for this is their technical nature, as appendices and budget drafts are given much space. While this may lead to questionable reliability of distribution of ideas, the repeated analysis of these documents led to the same results. Therefore, I argue that the findings are of interest, as it suggests that the Commission also tends to display ideas of liberal nature in cooperating together with Turkey on issues of migration during these years, which is a very interesting finding.

Thirdly, while the findings do indicate an almost equal distribution of ideas in some documents, and a few documents with prevailing liberal ideas. It is still clear to this paper that the Commission predominantly expresses ideas of realist nature when proposing documents during 2015-2016. This is especially true in the case of the Commission's *Action Plan on Return* (COM 2015/453), where it proposes ways on how to return third-country nationals from the EU. The results suggest a distribution of fifty nine realist-, against fifteen liberal ideas. The Commission emphasizes country responsibility of 'its own nationals' and differentiated rights between different groups of migrants, such as irregular migrants' lack of rights in movement (see reporting). Although safeguards are briefly mentioned, these entities are far less compared to placing the interests of the EU central in both security-, as well as cooperation with third countries. The Commission expresses ideas of obligation of irregular migrants to the EU in these documents, both as duties to cooperate in the return process, but also to provide agencies with information such as identification, otherwise they are considered at risk of absconding. Similar results are found in other documents, such as the *EU Action Plan against migrant smuggling* (COM 2015/285)*,* where the Commission expresses ideas of irregular migrants obligation towards the EU agencies, and enhancing EU's legal action on smuggling.

However, one of the overarching realist ideas present across the majority of documents analyzed, is in regards to cooperation with international actors. The QCA demonstrates that entities of encouraged cooperation when deemed especially beneficial to the EU itself, in regards to limiting migration to the EU, are by far dominating in the Commissions' legislative response during 2015-2016. The subcategory accounting for this idea, 8.a, is one of the subcategories with most entities prescribed to it throughout the QCA. Although it was sometimes deemed difficult to place whether cooperation with third-parties

was encouraged by the Commission for mutual gain, which would indicate ideas with liberal roots, or whether it was only suggested when the EU itself benefited from it, the findings still indicate prevailing realist ideas of cooperation with international actors when beneficial to the EU itself. It is even suggested by the Commission that Member States' special relationships with countries of transit should be "exploited to the full for the benefit of the EU" (COM 2016/385 p 8). Therefore, although liberal ideas are sometimes clearly present in these documents, realist ideas are prevailing when the Commission proposes legislative actions towards irregular migration.

This paper has taken upon arguments by scholars such Blondel (1987), on perceiving political leadership as an exercise in power, and that this power is also dependent on the institutional position of that leader (Elgie, 2005). As previous research suggests that the Commission is not merely bureaucratic, but one with abilities in "highly politicized tasks" (Christiansen, 1997, p 77), it holds powerful capabilities as an institution to exercise political influence. Its institutional position within the Union and significant influence (Nugent, 1995), also demonstrates a need for examination of how it expresses its influence in legislation. Therefore, any contribution to its leadership should be deemed relevant, considering its great legislative powers. Tömmel and Verdun (2017) also argue that there is a lack of political and policy aspects in EU leadership studies, and therefore this paper has adopted an ideational approach to track key ideas, that can assist in bridging the gap between policy, political ideas and leadership, suggested by scholars such as Mudde (2017) and Stiller (2010).

When legislatively responding to the policy failures exposed by the surge in irregular migration to the EU in 2015 and 2016, the Commission has responded with ideas deemed relevant to mend the drawbacks in policy performance, components Stiller (2010) and Butt (2019) argue is key to an ideational leader. As this institution is also policy rather than power-oriented, I argue that one can view the Commission as one ideational leader (Stiller, 2010). Instead of studying *whether* the Commission is an ideational leader, I have answered the question of *what kind* of ideational leadership it displays. I have examined the expression of ideational leadership to keep the aspects of political ideas rather than an ideology, as argued by Mudde (2017). The traceability of ideas, and the categorizibility of these, go hand in hand with the arguments suggested by Mudde (2017), as he argues that ideas are adaptable for different sets of material, and thereby easier to categorize rather than a political ideology (Mudde, 2017). This paper validates these arguments, as the categorization of ideas were

proven valid for the study of the documents, and helped structure the analysis. By examining fourteen key ideas in the selected material, from four different categories, I believe this paper has adequately been able to display the 'power of ideas' in policy making, as suggested of importance by Schmidt (2008), while at the same time contribute with a slightly different approach to leadership studies of an EU institution.

As discussed above, the results indicate that the Commission displays ideas predominantly rooted in realism rather than liberalism, when legislatively responding to drawbacks of policies to irregular migration. Therefore, I argue that the ideational leadership of the Commission is suggested to be of realist nature, to strengthen the EU's response to the irregular migration crisis during these years.

To answer this papers' research question;
"*Which key ideas, based in realism and liberalism, prevail in the legislative documents produced by the European Commission, when responding to the surge in irregular migration to the European Union in 2015 and 2016?*"

➢ Key ideas rooted in realism, such as cooperation solely when deemed beneficial to the EU, enhanced legal and border security, are prevailing in the Commissions' legislative response to irregular migration in 2015 and 2016. Although, liberal ideas of collective responsibility towards migrants and safeguards for all, are still very much present in the majority of the documents proposed during these years. It is therefore suggested that the Commission expresses an ideational leadership, responding to drawbacks in policy towards irregular migration, of predominantly realist nature, but with few key ideas rooted in liberalism. ➢

I have in this paper avoided a focus on *why* these ideas prevail, due to my attempt to steer clear of an individual-centered approach to EU leadership, and instead focus on an institution. I also deemed interviews with the lawmakers would then be necessary, as well as a complex analysis of multiple materials, and lastly, due to my focus on the topic of leadership rather than EU migration policies. Although for the sake of discussion, one may raise this question, and funnily enough I believe a possible answer can be found in the ideational leadership research. As we have seen in this paper, ideas of tighter border control, legal tools, and placement of EU interest in security and cooperation are prevailing. Scholars argue that the crisis exposed areas where there lacked an EU stance and coordination

(Niemann & Zaun, 2017), ultimately leading to the Commission seeing need for restrictions and symbiosis. These years showed that the directives in place were not enough to protect the interests of the EU, and EU-critics gained stronger grounds (Scipioni, 2017). I would argue that these are the policy drawbacks exposed to the Commission, and the realist ideas of state-interests and security suddenly became possible answers to the criticism and failures . In other words, as an ideational leader (Stiller, 2010), the Commission saw the need for policy change in securing the EU's own interests, and thereby these ideas are prevailing. However, I also argue that the Commission witnessed varied responses by the Member States to irregular migrants and refugees, as well as the humanitarian impact in 2015-16 (Scipioni, 2017), and this is one of the reasons why liberal ideas, such as call for collective responsibility and EU obligation to assist, are clearly present during the QCA.

Conclusion

Overall, I believe this thesis serves as an alternative perspective on ways to view and study leadership of an EU institution. This paper has taken upon the 'power of ideas' approach to leadership research of the Commission, and has thereby been able to examine its ideational leadership in legislation. It is deemed relevant due to the Commission's significant executive capabilities, the lack of an ideational approach to the study of leadership of the EU's institutions, as most are in regards to its Presidencies, reaction to events, and little focus on actual political theories (Tömmel & Verdun, 2017). Although the findings of this paper are limited in regards to its general ideational leadership, as it solely studies legislative documents proposed during a certain timeframe, this paper has opened up a discussion of ways to perceive and examine an EU institution as a whole. As well as adapted a trackable and categorizable approach to capture political ideas in policy-making and legislation, as suggested by scholars such as Mudde (2017).

The results indicate that the Commission, as a policy-oriented entrepreneur, responded with ideas to drawbacks in the EU's legislations to irregular migration, that correlate with those in the international relations theory realism, such as; enhancing EU security in borders and legal tools, differentiated rights between groups, and cooperation when deemed especially beneficial to the EU. However, ideas of liberalism are, as mentioned, still present in regards to ideas of collective responsibility, EU's obligations and safeguards for all.

Further research on the ideational leadership of EU institutions is of absolute interest. I suggest future contributions to further take the approach as the one of Stiller (2010) and Butt (2019), and examine if individual EU leaders could be considered of ideational nature or not. By studying responses to policy failures, and examine if these can later be found in changes to legislation. Similarly, as the Commission does have significant executive powers, it would be of interest for scholars to interview the policy-makers to answer questions of why these extracted ideas prevail in its legislative responses, to understand the different levels of its ideational leadership. I would also suggest future research to take into account other sets of material, such as press releases and speeches by the Commission Presidents, to examine if the ideas expressed make their way into the proposals. As well as performing comparative studies, by tracing the change of ideas after proven policy failures. Other policy areas such as environment policies, and the euro crisis changes to legislations, could also be valuable assets to the ideational leadership research.

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Appendices

Google Drive Spreadsheet - FULL DATA QCA
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