**Bo Petersson (Malmö) & Lena Kainz (Oxford) about:**

# Migration in the Media

## Metaphors in Swedish and German News Coverage

**Abstract**

Migration-related events have received overwhelming attention in mainstream media coverage within Europe in recent years. This study investigates the metaphorical framing of migration issues by comparing dominant discursive patterns from two national and two regional daily newspapers in Sweden and Germany. Applying a corpus-based critical metaphor analysis, the spotlight falls on metaphors prevalent in media articles published during the EU Valletta Summit on migration held in November 2015. The article is inspired by Lakoff and Johnson's classic work, *Metaphors We Live By*, according to which metaphors are components of everyday language with a pervasive influence on thoughts and actions. Adhering to this logic, metaphors become most powerful when taken for granted (»naturalized«) and therefore evade readers' attention. Apart from tracing naturalized metaphorical framings in mainstream Swedish and German media coverage, this study discusses how the discursive connotations conveyed by dominant metaphors are likely to influence readers' interpretation of migration-related issues and policies.

**Zusammenfassung**

Ereignisse zum Thema Flucht und Migration erhielten während der letzten Jahre erhöhte Aufmerksamkeit in der medialen Berichterstattung innerhalb Europas. Dieser Artikel untersucht die Verwendung von Metaphern in Bezug auf Geflüchtete durch den Vergleich von Mediendiskursen in je zwei nationalen und zwei regionalen Tageszeitungen in Schweden und Deutschland. Im Rahmen einer korpus-basierten Analyse stehen die Metaphern im Fokus, die in der Berichterstattung während des EU-Valletta-Gipfels zum Thema Migration vom November 2015 überwiegend zu finden sind. Dieser Artikel ist inspiriert von Lakoffs und Johnsons bahnbrechender Veröffentlichung *Metaphors We Live By*, der zufolge Metaphern als Bestandteile alltäglicher Sprache einen tiefgreifenden Einfluss auf Gedankengänge wie auch Handlungen ausüben. Nach dieser Logik sind Metaphern dann am einflussreichsten, wenn sie als selbstverständlich angesehen werden und sich dem Bewusstsein der Leser_innen entziehen. Neben der Aufdeckung vermeintlich normalisierter metaphorischer Redewendungen in schwedischer wie deutscher Berichterstattung wird auch erörtert, wie die den Metaphern innewohnenden Konnotationen die Wahrnehmung migrationspolitischer Fragen zu beeinflussen vermögen.

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## Introduction[1]

Over the past few years, migratory trajectories of both those seeking asylum in the European Union (EU) and those having lost their lives in the attempt to do so have been at the centre of attention of policymakers and the European public. The increased number of requests for asylum being made in the EU as well as the tragic images of people on the move have triggered intense reactions, ranging from outpourings of solidarity to xenophobic resentment. In 2015, the number of first-time asylum applicants within the EU member states more than doubled from approximately 563,000 in 2014 to almost 1.26 million.[2] Indeed, the number of asylum applications within the EU-28 in 2015 was almost double the number recorded within the EU-15 in 1992 at the height of the wars in former Yugoslavia.[3] It is therefore hardly surprising that migration-related subjects have come to dominate news coverage within Europe and frequently surface on front pages of national and regional news media.

Germany and Sweden have long been occupying leading positions within the EU regarding the reception of asylum applications per capita (Sweden) as well as in absolute figures (Germany).[4] During the initial months of the so-called migration crisis of 2015, the two countries were clearly the most accommodating within the EU regarding the reception of asylum seekers. However, in mid-autumn 2015, both the German and the Swedish parliament adopted policy changes in less forthcoming directions. On October 23, 2015, the so-called Asylum Access Acceleration Act entered into force, instigating changes in Germany's asylum law. Among these changes were severe rights restrictions imposed upon asylum seekers as well as beneficiaries of subsidiary protection, such as prolonged restrictions on their freedom of movement during the asylum process, an expansion of the list of safe countries of origin as well as the withdrawal of notification of those liable for removal prior to being deported.[5] Shortly thereafter, on November 12, 2015, the Swedish government, in contravention of the principle of free movement within the EU stipulated by the Schengen Agreement, introduced identity controls for people entering Swedish national territory from Northern Germany or Denmark by ferry or the Oresund Bridge crossing.[6] The period we focus on in our analysis coincides with this turning point toward more restrictive immigration and refugee policies. This study deals with news coverage in the two countries during two especially eventful days in the autumn of 2015, namely November 11 and 12. On these dates, apart from Sweden's decision to re-introduce police controls on its Southern border, the EU Valletta Summit on migration was held in the capital of Malta. Altogether, these developments and events garnered extensive media attention, both from Swedish and German media outlets.

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[2] Eurostat 2016.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Eurostat 2015.

[5] Grundler 2016.

[6] Regeringen 2015.

# Migration in the Media: Metaphors in Swedish and German News Coverage

These media discourses contain a plethora of metaphorical framings in their coverage of migration and refugee related issues. Our main argument is that such metaphorical framings, especially after having been naturalized in mainstream media discourses on refugees and asylum seekers, have a profound influence on readers' dispositions toward migration-related events and policies. The naturalization of metaphors generally denotes the process in which a metaphor has taken root in public discourse and tends to be resilient and resistant to change. When a metaphor has reached that stage, it is used without even being thought of as a metaphor. It has become naturalized and has turned into common sense.[7]

Against this backdrop, the research question motivating our analysis is this: *Which metaphors predominate in German and Swedish news discourses on refugees and which predispositions might these naturalized metaphorical framings create regarding readers' interpretation of migration-related events and policies?* Exploring this question matters because it allows us to gain a more nuanced understanding of the societal climate in Germany and Sweden in which the policy decisions on how to deal with the sudden large-scale migration are embedded.

In order to answer this research question, we engage in a close reading of 358 news articles published in national and regional German and Swedish newspapers during the EU Valletta Summit on migration held on November 11 and 12, 2015. The reason for this methodological approach is that the topic of migration and refugees featured particularly prominently in both countries' news discourses during the summit. This not only led to an increase in the number of news articles focusing on refugee policies on EU- and country levels, and hence pertinent to our research question, but also heightened the comparability of news discourses across the two countries as both Germany and Sweden actively participated in the Valletta Summit.

This study's theoretical point of departure is that news-media content both reflects and influences public sentiment. The media »construct, co-construct, develop and maintain certain shared visions of reality«.[8] To be more precise, we focus on one particular component of media language, namely metaphor, which we understand to have a pervasive influence on human thought and action. This paper traces and uncovers the predominating metaphors in articles published on the websites of two national and two regional newspapers in Germany and Sweden. Here, it is crucial to bear in mind that the distinction between social media and print media, whether on paper or online, is far from clear-cut. The use of language defies the boundary between print and social media outlets as both spheres are intertwined in terms of content and readership, and thus feed off each other. This has implications for the emergence and popularity of metaphors. In contrast to print media, social media can be expected to be far less restrained and sophisticated in their argumentation, often displaying downright xenophobic and racist sentiments.[9] But while social media may have transformed print media over the years, it has not replaced them, and this gives good reason to study old-style media. If negative, albeit more sober-minded, views

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[7] Kulyk 2006, p. 281–314.

[8] Petersson 2006, p. 40.

[9] Awan 2014.

on asylum seekers and refugees are prevalent there, they can be expected to be quite widespread in the societies in which they are based, in which case there is indeed a social problem that needs to be addressed and remedied.

A similar logic lies behind our decision to focus our analysis on Germany and Sweden. While these two countries have been standard-bearers within the EU for generous policies on the reception of asylum seekers, increasingly restrictive discourses are also coming into play in both countries. And again, if negative sentiments are traced even in the comparatively most benevolent settings within the EU, this is ominous for less accommodating milieus for asylum seekers and refugees.[10] Overall, our approach of analyzing metaphors prevalent in two countries which display a similar shift from liberal to more restrictive policies toward refugees and asylum seekers, instead of juxtaposing news discourses in countries with liberal and restrictive policies respectively, allows us to move beyond a preoccupation with stark contrasts and to conduct a more nuanced and refined comparison.

Rather than strictly comparing Germany and Sweden with each other, the study undertakes two interwoven case studies, where comparisons are made intermittently between the central and regional levels of analysis. The regional level carried much of the burden of the high numbers of arriving asylum seekers in the fall of 2015, and it was also from there that a considerable part of the pressure on the central levels of government for subsequent policy change emanated. Hence, regional and national news discourses on refugees and asylum seekers elicit equal attention in our analysis.

There are, however, some methodological limitations warranting scrutiny. Despite the increased number of news articles on refugees and asylum seekers, the summit's brevity and political intensity in comparison to media reporting on non-summit days may elicit a particular vernacular and hence impact the use and popularity of metaphors accordingly. For example, in the context of EU summits, there may be a tendency to employ a more restrictive language of control and containment which may, in turn, trickle down to and thus impact media discourses on both national and regional levels. Another shortcoming is the difficulty of tracing precisely how readers' interpretations of migration-related events and policies may be affected by naturalized metaphors. This is especially true given the heterogeneity of readers and the political inclinations of both national and regional newspapers. Put differently, personal traits of individual readers inclined to inform themselves by reading a particular news outlet need to be taken into account in analyzing how news discourses are processed by readers. Another potential limitation is our narrow focus on the respective metaphor itself while putting aside the question of who cultivates or uses it. Metaphors pertinent to our analysis stem from politicians across the political spectrum, journalists, citizens and, albeit rarely, refugees themselves. Who uses which metaphorical framing in which context may further impact readers' interpretations of information.

These methodological limitations can only be mitigated to a certain degree. While the brevity of the EU Valletta summit inhibits the analysis from arriving at generalizable statements, it is nonetheless possible to extrapolate

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[10]   Cf. Pred 2000.

prevalent tendencies in German and Swedish news discourses on refugees and asylum seekers from our findings. The possibility that the summit's impact contributed to a greater likelihood of restrictive metaphorical framings cannot be ruled out completely. However, a focus on both regional and national news coverage, as well as the fact that a majority of articles in our analysis were referring to a plethora of issues other than information on the EU Valletta Summit, attenuates this risk somewhat. Being aware that metaphors do not predetermine a certain interpretation of information, it is neither this article's intention to suggest a direct causality between naturalized metaphors and readers' interpretations of events and policies, nor is it our aspiration to analyze to what extent such interpretations may be influenced by those who use naturalized metaphors. Rather, in line with our research question, we employ a structure-based instead of an actor-based critical metaphor analysis. Unless featuring in the title of the respective article, all metaphors are contextualized by providing the whole passage in which they appeared in the news. Against the backdrop of our research question, the issue of who cultivates and uses these metaphorical framings is important, but not the main focus of our analysis. Ultimately, this methodological approach allows us to trace which metaphors predominate in German and Swedish media discourses on refugees, and to outline likely directions in which readers' understanding and perception of refugee and migration issues may be led.

## Understanding Metaphor

The study of metaphor has a long history in political analysis, with roots going all the way back to Aristotle. Its renaissance as a genre within political studies is more recent, even if more than 35 years have passed since Lakoff and Johnson wrote their seminal book *Metaphors We Live By* which reinvigorated the research agenda.[11] Their key argument is that individuals think and reason by using metaphors, and that these also have a profound influence on human action. In a similar vein, Morgan argued that »[t]he use of metaphor implies a way of thinking and a way of seeing that pervades how we understand the world generally«.[12] This opinion still holds sway. In a recent piece on press reporting of the Euro crisis, metaphors are recognized as a valuable starting point for the study of cognitive as well as ideological determinants of discourse.[13] Kövecses extends this cognitive approach to metaphor theory by elaborating on how conceptual metaphors are based in bodily experiences, taking into account that human cognition in general and the emergence of metaphors in particular are grounded in different kinds of experiences, with embodiment being one of them.[14] As metaphors have fundamental significance for the way in which individuals conceive of the world around them, they deserve to be central objects of study within the social sciences, and this is also the point of departure of our study.[15]

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[11]   Lakoff & Johnson 1980.

[12]   Morgan 1986, p. 12.

[13]   Arrese & Vara-Miguel 2016, p. 133–155.

[14]   Kövecses 2015.

[15]   Lakoff & Johnson 1980.

When metaphors are used in language and thought, it is to make less well-known phenomena understood in terms of phenomena that are more familiar.[16] There does not have to be an original similarity between the well-known and the lesser-known phenomena. Rather, the metaphor itself creates such a likeness.[17] Metaphor contributes to a shift in the use of a word or a phrase by giving it a new meaning.[18] The use of metaphor thus generates new insights into the understanding of the phenomenon that needs to be elucidated. It can be used as a rhetorical device, prompting people to think in different directions than the customary ones. In the early 1960s, Wheelwright introduced the distinction between the »vehicle« and »tenor« of the metaphor, whereby the »vehicle« was the well-known part and the »tenor« the concept that needed to be more elaborately understood.[19] More recently, Charteris-Black as well as Arrese and Vara-Miguel use the terms »source domain« and »target domain« to denote the same phenomena.[20] In other words, the target domain was defined and understood through the transfer of a set of ascribed characteristics normally associated with the source domain. Similarly, Black speaks of »a system of associated commonplaces«,[21] whereas Lakoff and Johnson refer to »experiential gestalts«.[22] Hereby, it is important to bear in mind that not all its ascribed characteristics are invariably transferred from the »source domain« to the »target domain«. As the employment of metaphor focuses on a selection of certain key or superficial aspects of a complex phenomenon, it produces a rather caricatured insight.[23] Employing a metaphor to understand the function of metaphor itself, it acts as a filter that lets through or even reinforces information which is congruous with the metaphor and hinders discrepant information which is not. It therefore »selects, emphasizes, suppresses and organizes« what the individual will perceive.[24] As will be shown in our analysis, we select migration- and refugee-related keywords from the »target domain« to create our corpus-based sample of pertinent Swedish and German press reporting during the EU Valletta Summit.

Furthermore, the distinction between ontological and structural metaphors warrants attention. In their study, Lakoff and Johnson speak about »ontological metaphors« whose functions are to depict »events, activities, emotions and ideas, et cetera as entities and substances«.[25] This allows the language users to refer to, categorize, group and quantify abstract phenomena, thus approaching them in ways that would not otherwise have been possible. As Lakoff and Johnson point out: »Ontological metaphors like these are so natural and so pervasive in

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[16]  See e.g. Charteris-Black 2011 as well as Lakoff & Johnson 1980.

[17]  Black 1962.

[18]  Charteris-Black 2011.

[19]  Wheelwright 1962, p. 73.

[20]  See Arrese & Vara-Miguel 2016, p. 134–135 as well as Charteris-Black 2011.

[21]  Black 1962, p. 40.

[22]  Lakoff and Johnson 1980.

[23]  Morgan 1986.

[24]  Black 1962, p. 44–45.

[25]  Lakoff & Johnson1980, p. 25.

our thought that they are usually taken as self-evident, direct descriptions of [...] phenomena. The fact that they are metaphorical never occurs to most of us«.[26]

To gain a better understanding of how metaphors serve to shape our thoughts and actions, however, one needs to take one further step and unpack whatever specific objects and substances are invoked to structure the understanding. This is where we need to address »structural metaphors«.[27] Structural metaphors bring with them more precise connotations, ideas and associations that are prone to nudge people's thoughts in a certain direction. They carry with them a chain of »subliminal impressions« that are not articulated on a conscious level but affect thoughts and actions all the same.[28] Hence, structural metaphors constitute a central unit of analysis in any study of everyday discourse and its implications. The analysis of these metaphors contributes to our understanding of how world views are communicated persuasively in language.[29]

One example of how structural metaphors shed light upon abstract domains is provided by Petersson in his study of political language use in the Soviet Union where he shows how the small-state security strategy of neutrality was alternately depicted as a »cover« hiding clandestine military cooperation with the West or as a »path« leading previously uncommitted nations over to the Soviet bloc.[30] In a similar vein, the essayist Sontag described how cancer treatment is frequently understood as war-making: cancer cells are »killed« or »annihilated« as they have »invaded« or »infiltrated« the patient's body.[31] For his part, Charteris-Black shows how politics was often publicly defined by former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher in terms of conflict.[32] This is not surprising since the imagery of war and conflict is indeed one of the most common when it comes to depicting how to approach difficult and negatively connoted phenomena in contemporary society. We shall return to this subject in the context of our empirical analysis below.

## The Naturalization of Metaphors and the Role of Media Discourses

A key tenet underlying our study of naturalized metaphors in Swedish and German news discourses is that not only the highly visible metaphors are important, but also, and especially, those that have become naturalized and go relatively unnoticed.[33] As Billig famously argued, it is the flag which hangs seemingly unnoticed outside a public building that perhaps creates the greatest impact on our sentiments on an everyday basis.[34] Similarly, the metaphors that are used on a routine basis and taken for granted without the user even being aware of their status

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[26]    Ibid., p. 28.

[27]    Lakoff & Johnson 1980.

[28]    Charteris-Black 2011, p. 4.

[29]    Ibid., p. 28.

[30]    Petersson 1990.

[31]    Sontag 1981.

[32]    Charteris-Black 2011, p. 2–3.

[33]    Kainz 2016.

[34]    Billig 1995.

as metaphors are in many respects the most powerful ones. As pointed out by Kros, there is special reason to be wary of these because they are seldom interrogated, even if, or precisely because, they have passed into common usage.[35] That is why it is important to chart the discursive landscape of naturalized metaphors.

However, this discursive space of metaphors is still malleable and open to contestation. In the realm of public communication and media narratives, a struggle for hegemony is always going on, and as noted by Miller, »competing metaphorical definitions can arise to supplant [the hitherto prevailing metaphors] and create a new orthodoxy«.[36] Some actors are more successful than others in introducing new metaphors. Skilled political and other public communicators can be highly influential, introducing »sound-bites« or witty one-liners carried by metaphors.[37] These prominent metaphors can often lie dormant, to be triggered into more active use when prompted by contextual factors. The bear metaphor used in Western public discourse to depict a perceived menace from Russia would be a case in point.[38]

Media narratives are a rich source for the study of figurative language, such as the naturalization process of metaphors, and play a particularly important part in shaping and confirming the world views of the public.[39] They reflect predominant public discourses on topical issues and are therefore of central interest for a study focused on public perceptions of phenomena such as migration. However, media outlets do not only reflect, but also shape and reinforce predominant public perceptions. Media discourses, whether articulated in the online social media setting or in the garb of old-style broadsheets, create resonance among the public, not least due to their ability to present complex issues in an accessible way. Their use of naturalized metaphors and the connotations that go with them make the media a powerful channel of influence on their readers.[40]

There is a growing flora of research devoted to the study of how metaphor is employed to frame migration and refugee issues in both print and social media. In his analysis of tabloid media discourse on terrorism, Spencer demonstrates the impact of metaphors on British counter-terrorism and immigration policies.[41] Analyzing media discourses about children of undocumented immigrants in the United States, Lederer explores the pejorative nature of the term »anchor baby«.[42] Another example is provided by Reynolds' study of metaphors and terminology used in local and national American newspaper coverage of Central American minors during the summer of 2014.[43] She observes the contradiction between seemingly objective news articles and the use of metaphors with connotations that are negative and may imply danger or harm to already castigated groups.[44] In

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[35]  Kros 2012, p. 54–68.

[36]  Miller 1979, p. 161.

[37]  Charteris-Black 2011.

[38]  Berg & Oras 2000, p. 601–625.

[39]  See e.g. Breeze 2014, p. 241–259; Krennmayr 2011; Petersson 2006.

[40]  Krennmayr 2011, p. 65.

[41]  Spencer 2012, p. 393–419.

[42]  Lederer 2013, p. 248–266.

[43]  Reynolds 2015.

[44]  See also Wodak 2001, p. 6.

his study on the media representation of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants in British newspapers during the Balkan conflict in 1999 and the UK general election in 2005, Khosravinik shows that the metaphorical framing used during this period remains stable over time and across his sample of newspapers, despite their varying ideological and political standpoints.[45] Charteris-Black discusses how the swamp metaphor with regard to immigration to the United Kingdom was introduced by the British politician Norman Tebbit and became highly influential in the understanding of the issue.[46] In another study, he explores how the employment of metaphors played a vital role in right-wing political communication on immigration policy in the 2005 British electoral campaign.[47] More precisely, it heightened emotional fears about the infiltration of Britain, and suggested that controlling immigration through securing the national borders would ensure control over social change. Our study complements this previous research on naturalized metaphors in media discourses primarily in two regards. On the one hand, it draws attention to the possibility of employing critical metaphor analysis not only to address agent-focused research questions, but also in structure-focused approaches which centre on discursive practices and patterns. On the other hand, it extends the analysis of media discourses across a regional as well as a national divide, within and between two countries.

## Research Design and Methodology

We selected four newspapers for analysis to study dominant metaphorical framings of migration issues across the national and regional divide in Germany and Sweden. For each country, one national daily newspaper as well as one regional daily newspaper was singled out for closer scrutiny. The national news sources were *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ; Germany) and *Dagens Nyheter* (DN; Sweden) while *Passauer Neue Presse* (PNP; Germany) and *Sydsvenskan* (SDS; Sweden) were the regional news outlets chosen. The national newspapers were selected according to leading circulation figures,[48] whereas the decisive criterion for the choice of regional news outlets was geographical. The major area of coverage of the two regional newspapers coincides with the principal geographical conduit through which most asylum seekers tended to enter the respective country. Following this logic, regional newspapers serving the southern areas of both countries were selected.

Following the lead of Lakoff and Johnson,[49] our ambition was to reveal the most common metaphors »we«, i.e. non-specialist newspaper readers, seem to live by in Germany and Sweden when reading about the movement of asylum seekers to the EU. The study applies a corpus-based critical metaphor analysis to gain a better understanding of how migrants and migration issues are being framed metaphorically and what connotations are conveyed by Swedish and German media discourses on migration.

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[45]    Khosravinik 2009, p. 477–498.

[46]    Charteris-Black 2011.

[47]    Charteris-Black 2006, p. 563–581.

[48]    BILD Zeitung has the highest circulation in Germany, but was disregarded in our analysis due to its status as a tabloid news outlet.

[49]    Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Charteris-Black 2004, p. 21.

Generally, critical metaphor analysis is modelled along the lines of critical discourse analysis (CDA). In the tradition of Fairclough and Wodak, among others, CDA regards language as a social practice and takes interest in the relation between language and power.[50] Mass media communication is an especially intriguing site of discursive power struggles. As Wodak argues, »[...] dominant structures stabilize conventions and naturalize them, that is, the effects of power and ideology in the production of meaning are obscured and acquire stable and natural forms: they are taken as ›given‹«.[51] Under the critical lens of CDA, the fallacy of such assumptions becomes obvious, since »[...] language is not powerful on its own – it gains power by the use powerful people make of it«.[52] The common aim of researchers using a CDA approach is to disclose dominant discursive patterns maintaining or reinforcing societal inequalities. Against this backdrop, it can be argued that naturalized metaphors »[...] provide excellent examples of these socially poignant representations [as] they constitute verbal evidence for an underlying system of ideas – or ideology – whose assumptions may be ignored if we are unaware of them«.[53]

We structure our critical metaphor analysis along the lines of three consecutive phases, namely the identification, interpretation and explanation of metaphor.[54] Initially, the identification of metaphor is performed in two stages. The first stage is based on a close reading of the corpus-based sample texts in order to identify likely candidate metaphors and to find out whether there is tension between the source domain and a metaphoric target domain on a linguistic, pragmatic and/or cognitive level.[55] The second stage is a further qualitative step, in which corpus contexts are examined in order to determine whether the use of the identified candidate metaphors is literal or indeed metaphorical in nature.[56] While Charteris-Black exemplifies this stage by selecting keywords from the source domain,[57] this study's corpus-based sample is based on keywords from the target domain. We chose a variety of media text corpora on the topic of migration, in which we then traced and categorized prevalent metaphors. Upon defining our initial sample, we included all articles that had the German or Swedish equivalents of the following keywords in either the headline, the lead or the body of the text: »refugee«, »asylum«, »migration«, »migration summit«, »EU-Africa-Summit«, »Malta« or »Valletta«. All in all, a total number of 358 articles published on the online websites of the four chosen news outlets during the two days of the EU Valletta

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[50]   Fairclough & Wodak 1997, p. 258–284.

[51]   Ibid., p. 3.

[52]   Ibid., p. 10.

[53]   Charteris-Black 2004, p. 29–30.

[54]   Ibid., 34–41 (2004); See also Fairclough 1995; Halliday & Kirkwood 1985.

[55]   Charteris-Black 2004, p. 35.

[56]   Ibid., p. 37.

[57]   Detailed examples of this are provided in Charteris-Black's research on war metaphors in sports reporting or biological and mechanistic metaphor in financial reporting, see e.g. Charteris-Black 2004, p. 111–167.

Summit were analyzed in depth, out of which 58 articles were retrieved from DN, 67 articles from SDS, 195 articles from SZ[58] and 38 articles from PNP.[59]

All the identified metaphorical expressions were categorized according to their respective source domains. The source domains identified in our study include the following categories: natural events and disasters (subcategory water and subcategory snow/other), war/clashes/crises, health/sickness/body, animals, personification of abstract notions (e.g. states/borders as animate), geography, theatre, people as commodities/objects, quantity metaphors, home/housing, burden/pressure, games, and, finally, finance/economy. As it will be shown in our analysis, both Swedish and German media discourses link the target domain *migration* primarily to three dominant source domains, namely *refugees as commodities*, *migration as natural events and disasters* as well as *migration as wars, clashes and crises*. These categories correspond to the master structural metaphors we identified in our study.

The second phase – metaphor interpretation – »[...] involves establishing a relationship between metaphors and the cognitive and pragmatic factors that determine them«.[60] Originally, there is a semantic tension between thoughts and transaction within and between contexts; a structural metaphor can resolve this tension by showing them to be related.[61] Mappings of such metaphorizations can be understood as »[...] a set of systematic correspondences between the source and the target in the sense that constituent conceptual elements of B correspond to constituent elements of A«.[62]

The phase of interpretation within critical metaphor analysis ultimately relates to how readers understand and interpret metaphorical expressions. Here, it is key to bear in mind that neither interpretations nor intentions of encoders and decoders necessarily overlap, and that metaphors generally do not predetermine a certain interpretation. But, they may »[...] create a predisposition toward one interpretation over another [...] by utilising the underlying evaluations that are conveyed by the choice of certain words and phrases because of the particular connotations they convey«.[63] In our study, it is exactly these connotations and their likelihood to lead readers' interpretations of events in a certain direction that we intend to bring to the forefront.

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[58] In the case of SZ, 56 out of the 195 online articles analyzed were provided to SZ by Deutsche Presse Agentur (dpa), the largest German news agency supplying news in several languages to print and online media, radio, television and national news agencies.

[59] There was a degree of overlap between identical articles published on the websites of both SZ and PNP. This overlap is due to the fact that some articles were originally produced by dpa (see footnote above) and were featured on the websites of both newspapers. In order to avoid including duplicates of such identical articles in our analysis, our sample from PNP contains only those articles which had not been produced by dpa and which had not already been featured on the website of SZ. In total, the sample includes 38 articles published on the website and in the print version of PNP.

[60] Charteris-Black 2004, p. 37.

[61] Ibid., p. 22.

[62] Kövecses 2002, p. 6. For a more in-depth discussion on the link between conceptual metaphors and bodily experiences, see Kövecses 2015.

[63] Charteris-Black 2004, p. 41.

The final stage of critical metaphor analysis is concerned with the explanation of metaphor and »[...] involves the social agency that is involved in [metaphors'] production and their social role in persuasion«.[64] Thus, the focus here lies on gaining an understanding of the ideological and rhetorical motivation underlying the use of the respective metaphors. This is particularly salient when applying an actor-based approach to critical metaphor analysis.[65] In contrast to the actor-based approach, this article applies a structure-based approach to the study of metaphor. The focus of analysis revolves around the broader question of how metaphors shape the reality we perceive. As Spencer points out, »[r]ather than asking the question of who is responsible for certain metaphors and why these metaphors are used, this approach focuses on the structure which follows from these metaphors«.[66] In pursuit of our aim of tracing the dominant metaphors in Swedish and German media discourses on migration, our focus lies on the first two phases of critical metaphor analysis as outlined above, namely the identification and interpretation of metaphor.

### Tracing Naturalized Metaphors in German and Swedish Media Discourses

In our exploration of the dominant metaphors and their connotations, three source domains were particularly prominent in the national and regional Swedish and German news outlets, namely *refugees as commodities*, *migration as natural events and disasters* and *migration as wars, clashes and crises*. Concerning SZ, over 85.64 % of the articles we analyzed contained metaphors derived from at least one of these dominant source domains.[67] Concerning PNP, 78.94 % of all articles contained metaphors derived from at least one of these dominant source domains.[68] Similar figures were retrieved for the Swedish case. The source domain *refugees as commodities* was especially prominent in German media discourses while the source domains *migration as natural events and disasters* and *migration as wars, clashes and crises* could be found on the regional as well as the national level in both countries' news outlets. We have selected the passages below to illustrate how dominant metaphors frame news coverage on the topic. It should be noted that while some of the chosen examples contain several metaphors, we marked in *italics* only those metaphors which were relevant for the respective example. This was made to increase the coherence of our analysis. In line with our qualitative approach, these examples are not necessarily representative of the universe of metaphorical framings prevalent in Swedish and German media coverage. Instead, they serve as points of entry for gaining a better understanding of pervasive and often

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[64]   Ibid., p. 39.

[65]   For instance, Charteris-Black applies such an agent-focused approach when analyzing rhetorical speeches given by prominent British or American politicians over the past couple of decades to show how metaphor is being used in a systematic manner to create political myths, to communicate subliminal meanings and to evoke unconscious emotions in listeners or readers. See e.g. Charteris-Black 2011; Charteris-Black 2013.

[66]   Spencer 2012, p. 398.

[67]   Out of all 195 articles analyzed in SZ, 72 articles contained at least one war metaphor, 72 articles contained at least one nature metaphor and 23 articles contained at least one metaphor on refugees as commodities.

[68]   Out of all 38 articles analyzed in PNP, 14 articles contained at least one war metaphor, 12 articles contained at least one nature metaphor and 4 articles contained at least one metaphor on refugees as commodities.

naturalized metaphors and of which predispositions these metaphorical framings may create regarding readers' interpretations of migration-related events and policies.

### Refugees as Commodities

Before delving into the metaphorical commodification of refugees, an observation regarding the prevalent semantic practices of naming people warrants attention. There was one major distinction between German and Swedish media discourses on migration, namely the way people were being referred to. There is, of course, quite a common tendency in news reporting to categorize people into certain groups to simplify a given storyline. Even though this might be conceived as an indispensable tool for news coverage, it is necessary to distinguish between various ways of categorization. In both countries, people on the move were generally depicted as »refugees« or »migrants« in both regional and national media outlets.[69] However, whereas articles in the Swedish national as well as regional press often referred to »fleeing human beings«,[70] German discourses rarely ever referred to human beings. Instead, they contained several other epithets. Among them were »those seeking protection«,[71] »the newly arrived«,[72] »those who newly moved into the area«,[73] »immigrants«,[74] »asylum coveters«,[75] »asylum seekers«[76] or »illegal migrants«.[77] These examples indicate a tendency in Swedish news coverage to individualize umbrella terms such as migrants or refugees as opposed to the German case in which the trend was to refrain from portraying people as human beings and instead refer to them as anonymous collectives. Several articles from the Swedish sample were stories focusing on and following the destinies of individual refugees, thus making them visible as individual human beings and elevating them from the anonymous and faceless mass. We could find only very few counterparts in the German samples.

It is hardly surprising that the prominent usage of these epithets used in German media discourses on refugees and asylum seekers are in line with the popularity of the structural metaphor *refugees as commodities* in both national as well as regional news outlets. The following quotes exemplify how people are metaphorically portrayed as commodities:

> German arms exports into crisis areas are indisputably a *reason for the* »*import*« [sic] *of asylum seekers* (PNP, 12 November 2015).[78]

> Upon the termination of their claim, the refugees who are accommodated there are either supposed to be

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[69]    Unless stated otherwise, all translations and emphases are by the authors.

[70]    »människor på flykt« (Nilsson 2015; TT 2015a).

[71]    »Schutzsuchende« (Dpa 2015a).

[72]    »Neuankömmlinge« (Bigalke 2015).

[73]    »die neu Zugezogenen« (Schieder 2015).

[74]    »Immigranten« (Kaindl 2015).

[75]    »Asylbegehrende« (AFP 2015).

[76]    »Asylsuchende« (Brössler & Kirchner 2015).

[77]    »illegale Immigranten« (Kirchner 2015).

[78]    »Deutscher Rüstungsexport in Krisengebiete sei unstrittig ein *Grund für den "Import" von Asylbewerbern*« (Dpl 2015).

directly deported or transferred to a connecting facility. This would be more practical *than first distributing them inside the country and collecting them up again afterwards* (PNP, 11 November 2015).[79]

[They] chose a location near the old building of the Federal Agency for Technical Relief, *where those refugees* who are waiting for their continuing journey to Passau *are already being processed* (PNP, 12 November 2015).[80]

[...] the current weekly quota that needs to be accommodated by the county of Munich (SZ, 11 November 2015).[81]

Authorities and volunteers in Northern Germany braced themselves for a possible *backlog of transit refugees* (SZ, 12 November 2015).[82]

Such metaphors degrade humans to objects being imported, processed and redistributed. In relation to the structural metaphor *refugees as commodities*, there was another prevalent metaphorical framing, namely *migration as burden and pressure*. Most prevalently on a regional level, German and Swedish news outlets displayed a tendency to report on migration-related news with reference to metaphors related to this theme:

Increasingly tough propositions are put forth to *reduce the refugee pressure* on Sweden and the EU (SDS, 11 November 2015).[83]

It is through the central accommodation of refugees that *the pressure on Bavarian counties regarding the accommodation of refugees is supposed to be attenuated* (PNP, 11 November 2015).[84]

The way in which the metaphors above are used in everyday media discourses is likely to affect readers' empathy and solidarity with what seems to be the lot of the objectified human beings. The possibility of conducting a debate with a focus on individuals and their experiences of mobility becomes obscured in such a metaphorical framing. A study preoccupied with the analysis of visual framings of asylum seekers on the front pages of two Australian newspapers reached a similar conclusion.[85] Given that the bulk of the front pages refrained from portraying individuals and instead opted for displaying large groups of people on boats, the argument was that these visual patterns reinforced a politics of fear grounded in the arrival of large physical numbers of newcomers. In any event, they left scant room for a compassionate debate of migration issues.

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[79] »Die dort untergebrachten Flüchtlinge sollen am Ende des Verfahrens entweder direkt abgeschoben oder aber in eine Anschlussunterbringung gebracht werden. Dies sei praktikabler, *als sie erst im Land zu verteilen und anschließend wieder einzusammeln*« (Kain 2015).

[80] »[Sie] haben sich für einen Standort nahe dem alten THW-Gebäude entschieden, *wo bereits Flüchtlinge abgefertigt werden*, die auf ihre Weiterfahrt nach Passau warten« (Pfingstl 2015).

[81] »[...] *das derzeitige Wochenkontingent*, das der Landkreis München unterbringen muss« (Vettori 2015).

[82] »Behörden und Helfer in Norddeutschland stellten sich auf einen möglichen *Rückstau von Transitflüchtlingen* ein« (Dpa 2015b).

[83] »Allt tuffare förslag förs nu fram för att *minska flyktingtrycket mot Sverige och EU*« (TT 2015b).

[84] »Durch die zentrale Unterbringung von Flüchtlingen soll der *Druck auf die bayerischen Kommunen zur Unterbringung von Flüchtlingen abgemildert werden*« (Kain 2015).

[85] Bleiker et al. 2013, p. 398–416.

### *Migration as Natural Events and Disasters*

Most metaphors alluding to natural events and disasters were conceptualized around the notion of water and alluded to the »flows« and »streams« of refugees, the »damming up of human smuggling networks« or the potential »seeping in of terrorists« into the respective country. Below are some examples of this:

> It would be wrong to think that the *chaos quite suddenly erupted* around everyone [...]. Therefore, [the government] *irresponsibly ran into a wave of refugees* which started far more than a year ago. [...] The coalition should have realized in the fall of 2014 at the latest *what is rolling towards them* (SZ, 12 November 2015).[86]

> For Syrian refugees, Angela Merkel *turned into the saving anchor in a situation of dire emergency* and received love messages via the internet (SZ, 11 November 2015).[87]

> A common plan of action was issued by the conference *to embank human smuggling* and to send economic refugees back to Africa. [...] The Europeans want to make *Ankara stem the flow of refugees* (PNP, 12 November 2015).[88]

> By now, Sweden starts to lose hope of receiving support from the EU in the crisis and participates in the European countries' race to the bottom to *reduce the flow of asylum seekers* (DN, 12 November 2015).[89]

> Sweden is about to collapse in the tracks of *the refugees who are flowing into Europe*. [...] Far too late it was realized that the lovely and cherished generosity does not endure such a *breaking wave of fleeing people* (SDS, 12 November 2015).[90]

On a similar note, metaphors referring to other kinds of natural events, disasters and negative phenomena include the following examples among others:

> The aim of a border control is that those who do plan on seeking asylum are referred to the right authority and that *we weed out those who do not plan on seeking asylum*. Those who do not have the right to be in

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[86]  »Falsch aber wäre es zu denken, *das Chaos sei ganz plötzlich über alle hereingebrochen* [...]. Deshalb liefen sie [die Regierung] verantwortungslos unvorbereitet in eine *Flüchtlingswelle*, die vor weit mehr als einem Jahr begann. [...] Nun hätte die Koalition spätestens im Herbst 2014 erkennen können, *was auf sie zurollt*« (Braun 2015).

[87]  »Angela Merkel wurde für syrische Flüchtlinge *zum rettenden Anker in höchster Not* und bekam Liebesbotschaften via Internet« (Dpa 2015d).

[88]  »Die Konferenz verabschiedete zwar einen gemeinsamen Aktionsplan, *um Menschenschmuggel einzudämmen* und mehr Armutsflüchtlinge nach Afrika zurückzuschicken. [...] Die Europäer wollen erreichen, *dass Ankara den Flüchtlingszustrom bremst*« (Dpa 2015e).

[89]  »Nu börjar Sverige ge upp hoppet om EU:s stöd i krisen och ger sig in i de europeiska ländernas kapplöpning mot botten *för att minska strömmen av asylsökande*« (Stenberg 2015).

[90]  »I spåren av *flyktingarna som strömmar till Europa* håller *mottagningen i Sverige på att kollapsa*. [...] Alltför sent har man insett att den vackra och omhuldade generositeten *inte håller för en sådan stötvåg av människor på flykt*« (Nilsson 2015).

the territory should have the possibility to leave, as was earlier stated by Michael Mattsson, chief of the Southern Border Police Department, to HD-Sydsvenskan (SDS, 11 November 2015).[91]

Head of government Miro Cerar had announced this step the day before to control *the storm of refugees and migrants* heading from Croatia in the direction of Austria and Germany (PNP, 12 November 2015).[92]

*A mountain of problems* – Merkel and the EU in the refugee crisis (SZ, 12 November 2015).[93]

Such metaphorical framings convey panic-inducing notions to readers.[94] As the passages above highlight, the attribution to people of qualities ascribed to water runs the risk of metaphorically dehumanizing them due to the substance's lack of shape and colour and the impossibility of distinguishing one drop from another.[95] The popularity of metaphors drawn from the field of natural events and disasters was also identified by Arrese and Vara-Miguel in their study of the language of the European debt crisis used in public media discourses across Europe. Here, »[...] storms and turmoils are images that describe the turbulent, often unexpected, and almost always inevitable behavior of financial markets in specific moments of the crisis«.[96] Whether press reports concern the European debt crisis or migration issues, metaphors depicting natural events and disasters tend to frame restrictive political action as a key element in order to retain state sovereignty and control over national territories.[97] Indeed, the primeval forces of nature alluded to in these metaphors locate political measures concerning immigration on a spectrum ranging from palliative measures at best to utterly futile at worst.[98]

In addition, these metaphors and the connotations of natural catastrophes they convey are likely to divert readers' attention from the perilous journeys undertaken by refugees on their way to Europe. Instead, they contribute to Othering and the »us-versus-them« thinking so commonly found in media debates. While focusing on migratory movements as streams and flows directed northwards, toward Europe, these naturalized metaphorical framings obscure the fact that most people either internally or externally displaced remain outside of Europe in regions adjacent to the crisis areas. These examples illustrate how naturalized and pervasive metaphors have become once they have entered dominant media discourses.

Interestingly, the very use of negatively connoted metaphors alluding to natural events and disasters was sometimes also explicitly denounced in media discourses on migration. A case in point was the widely criticized comparison of refugees with an avalanche, voiced by Wolfgang Schäuble, Germany's Minister of Finance.

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[91] »Syftet med en gränskontroll är att de som tänker söka asyl hänvisas till rätt myndighet och *att vi gallrar bort dem som inte tänker söka asyl*. De som inte har rätt att vara i riket ska få möjlighet att lämna, har Michael Mattsson, chef för Gränspolissektion Syd, tidigare sagt till HD-Sydsvenskan« (Magnusson 2015).

[92] »Regierungschef Miro Cerar hatte diesen Schritt am Vortag angekündigt, um den *Ansturm von Flüchtlingen* und Migranten aus Kroatien in Richtung Österreich und Deutschland zu kontrollieren« (Dpa 2015f).

[93] »Ein Berg an Problemen – Merkel und die EU in der Flüchtlingskrise« (Dpa 2015a).

[94] Charteris-Black 2011, p. 13.

[95] Kainz 2016.

[96] Arrese & Vara-Miguel 2016, p. 147.

[97] Kainz 2016.

[98] White 2004, p. 82.

Schäuble stated that the movements of refugees could potentially expand to an avalanche and that he did not know whether the avalanche had already reached the valley or remained in the upper third part of the mountain slope where it threatened skiers. In an SZ article titled »[The Christian Democratic Party] is as unpredictable as the flow of refugees«,[99] Schäuble's remark on avalanches as a threat to skiers was perceived as a possible sideswipe at fellow party member, Chancellor Angela Merkel. As can be read in one of the many articles denouncing Schäuble's metaphorical comparison:

> It is with publicly stated doubts and an avalanche-comparison that the Minister of Finance Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU) has fuelled the dispute within the coalition concerning the German asylum policies. [...] President Joachim Gauck opposed these ›future horror scenarios‹ [sic] without explicitly naming Schäuble. [...] Minister of Justice, Heiko Maas, criticized Schäuble in a more direct manner: »People in emergency situations are not a natural catastrophe« (SZ, 12 November 2015).[100]

At the same time, however, the very same article addressing the backlash triggered by Schäuble's choice of words features naturalized metaphorical expressions alluding to natural events and disasters which were employed by other public figures without critically reflecting upon them:

> In an open letter to the head of the institution Franck-Jürgen Weise, members of the staff council of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees lamented that »[...] the dismantling of identity checks facilitates *the seeping in of fighters* affiliated to the terror militia IS.« [...] At the same time, [the head of the Social Democratic Party Gabriel] stressed that *the pace of the rush of refugees into Germany* should be reduced (SZ, 12 November 2015).[101]

There seems to be a contradiction here: Explicitly condemning the avalanche metaphor while simultaneously leaving the use of water metaphors unaddressed when reporting on migration-related issues. Indeed, this contradiction goes a long way toward proving our point about the necessity to unveil naturalized metaphors, those that pass unnoticed and are largely unflagged. Again, the most powerful metaphors are often the ones which are seldom analyzed critically because they have passed into common usage.[102]

### *Migration as Wars, Clashes and Crises*

Apart from structural metaphors alluding to natural events and disasters, metaphors connoting wars, clashes and crises were among the most commonly used expressions in the regional and national media discourses in both

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[99] »Die CDU ist so unberechenbar wie der Flüchtlingsstrom« (Braun & Roßmann 2015).

[100] »Mit öffentlichen Zweifeln und einem Lawinen-Vergleich hat Finanzminister Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU) den Koalitionsstreit über die deutsche Asylpolitik weiter angeheizt. [...] Bundespräsident Joachim Gauck trat ›Horrorszenarien für die Zukunft‹ [sic] entgegen, ohne allerdings Schäuble beim Namen zu nennen. [...] Justizminister Heiko Maas, kritisierte Schäuble direkter: ›Menschen in Not sind keine Naturkatastrophe‹« (Dpa 2015c).

[101] »Die BAMF-Personalräte beklagten in einem offenen Brief an Amtschef Frank-Jürgen Weise, [...] ›[d]er Wegfall der Identitätsprüfung erleichtert zudem auch das Einsickern von Kämpfern der Terrormiliz IS‹ [...] Zugleich betonte [SPD-Chef Gabriel], das Tempo des Flüchtlingsandrangs nach Deutschland sollte verringert werden« ibid.

[102] Kros 2012, p. 54–68.

countries. This was exemplified by the almost omnipresent use of the terms »refugee crisis« or »migration crisis« as well as the frequent employment of wordings such as »emergency shelters«,[103] »cries for help from the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees«,[104] »crisis meetings«[105] or »emergency funds« for Africa.[106] While German President Joachim Gauck called pessimistic remarks in the debate on refugees »dangerous«,[107] Cardinal Reinhard Marx urged everyone to »disarm in the debate on refugees«.[108] However, as these two examples highlight, both Gauck and Marx adhere to war-like rhetoric on migration themselves despite arguing against these very metaphorical lines. The following quotes again illustrate how media discourses on migration are framed by naturalized structural metaphors on wars, clashes and crises:

> Even before [Prime Minister Stefan Löfven's] departure he convinced his governmental partners in the Green Party that *the refugee crisis is now so acute that the border needs to be secured* [...]. The EU has offered to establish a special fund worth 35 billion Swedish crowns. It is meant to be used for development issues but also for border controls and *the fight against human smugglers* (SDS, 11 November 2015).[109]

> When looking at the government and its *management of the refugee crisis, there is suddenly a lot of talk about chaos*. [...] The *catastrophe of Lampedusa* [was] known. And it had to be clear for everybody, to the chancellor as well as the vice chancellor and the Minister of Interior, *that this calamity would only be the harbinger of an even bigger peregrination*. [...] The government passed *pragmatic emergency resolutions* instead of adopting a clear line. [...] [The Minister of Interior] stays *in the same, wrong mode of crisis* (SZ, 12 November 2015).[110]

While metaphors referring to wars, clashes and crises are naturalized elements in both countries' media coverage, the discourses in Sweden add nuances with their frequent emphasis on the notions of domestic law and order and the prevention of anarchy within its borders. The following quotes by the Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and his Minister of Interior Anders Ygeman demonstrate how this theme is echoed in Swedish news coverage on migration:

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[103]   »Notunterkünfte« (Langhans 2015).

[104]   »Hilferufe aus dem Bundesamt« (Dpa 2015g).

[105]   »Krisensitzungen« (Schieder 2015).

[106]   »Nothilfe-Topf« (Dpa 2015h).

[107]   »Bundespräsident Joachim Gauck hält besonders pessimistische Äußerungen in der Flüchtlingsdebatte für ›gefährlich‹: ›Es werden Horrorszenarien für die Zukunft entwickelt‹.« (Dpa 2015i).

[108]   »Wir müssen alle verbal abrüsten, wir alle!« (Wetzel 2015).

[109]   »Redan före avfärden övertygade han sina regeringspartners i Miljöpartiet att *flyktingkrisen nu är så akut att gränsen måste säkras* [...]. EU erbjuder sig att upprätta en särskild fond på 35 miljarder kronor. Den ska användas till bistånd, men också till gränskontroller och *bekämpning av människosmugglare*« (Lönnaeus 2015a).

[110]   »Beim Blick auf die Regierung und ihr *Management in der Flüchtlingskrise* ist plötzlich viel *vom Chaos die Rede*. [...] die *Katastrophe von Lampedusa* [war] bekannt. Und allen, der Kanzlerin wie dem Vizekanzler, dem Außenminister wie dem Innenminister, musste klar sein, dass *dieses Unglück der Vorbote einer noch größeren Wanderung* sein würde. [...] Die Regierung fasste *pragmatische Not-Beschlüsse statt sich eine klare Linie zu geben*. [...] [Der Innenminister] bleibt *im gleichen, falschen Krisenmodus*« (Braun 2015).

»We need to have *order at our borders. There needs to be order in the reception of refugees*«, says Prime Minister Stefan Löfven (S), who is currently in Malta where the EU is holding a summit meeting on refugees from Africa (SDS, 11 November 2015).[111]

*The Migration Board has lost control* over how many are travelling into the country and can no longer arrange for roofs over people's heads. [...] And the police [...] has now made the *assessment that there is a risk that order and security can no longer be upheld.* What we are seeing now, that people cannot be guaranteed a roof over their heads and instead are forced to spend the night in railway stations, *entails a threat to order and security*, said Anders Ygeman (SDS, 11 November 2015).[112]

The frequent framing of migration issues as metaphorical wars, clashes and crises or as prompting measures for reestablishing internal law and order shifts the focus from the crises people are attempting to leave behind to the allegedly dire consequences for the European host setting. The refugees themselves are depicted as a problem or a challenge, but depersonalized and of secondary significance on an individual level.

As has already been pointed out, migration issues are by no means the first occasion where war metaphors have been used as a source domain. One reason for the widespread invocation of these connotations is identified by Spencer in his study of the metaphorical framing of terrorism in British tabloid media between 2001 and 2005, in which he cautions about the implications of its use:

Searching for root causes of the problem is discouraged as critical voices are silenced. Criticism of the war becomes unpatriotic, cowardly and treacherous. The problem becomes apolitical, something which cannot be debated in the public realm.[113]

Structural metaphors alluding to either natural events and disasters or wars, clashes and crises complement each other. Water metaphors depicting migration issues either tend to legitimize restrictive political action or discount policy measures as palliative or even futile. Metaphors alluding to wars, clashes and crises are in a way ontologically aligned to nature metaphors, given the suggested impossibility of developing something other than a swift and reactive strategy in the wake of crisis. However, whereas nature-related metaphors bring connotations of people being powerless in the face of nature's whims, war metaphors allow for an interpretation where it is possible to make a difference and achieve victory, however hard-won. This may come at the price of great sacrifice, but the proclaimed enemy might well be defeated in the end, or so the story goes. In such a framing, the depiction of solutions to certain contemporary problems as successful battles in a war leaves scant room for

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[111]  »*Vi måste ha ordning och reda vid våra gränser. Det måste vara ordning i flyktingmottagandet*, säger statsminister Stefan Löfven (S), som befinner sig på Malta där EU på ett toppmöte om flyktingarna från Afrika« (Avellan 2015).

[112]  »[...] *Migrationsverket, som tappat kontroll* över hur många som reser in i landet och inte längre kan ordna tak över huvudet. [...] Och polisen [...] gör *bedömningen att det finns risk att ordning och säkerhet inte längre kan upprätthållas*. Det vi ser nu, att människor inte kan garanteras tak över huvudet utan tvingas övernatta på järnvägsstationer, det *innebär hot mot ordning och säkerhet*, sade Anders Ygeman« (Lönnaeus 2015b).

[113]  Spencer 2012, p. 402; cf. Sontag 1989.

compromise, benevolence or mercy.[114] If taken to their extreme, as indicated by the metaphor, the effects of these discourses can certainly be dehumanizing.

## Conclusion

Metaphors in media discourses plant certain imagery in readers' minds. There is a great need to increase the awareness of the power of language in general, and metaphors in particular, on salient issues such as migration. While tracing naturalized metaphors in media discourses on migration, several patterns across the national and regional divide in both Germany and Sweden became apparent in our analysis. Two of the source domains – *migration as natural events and disasters* and *migration as wars, clashes and crises* – dominated the media coverage on migration issues in all four newspapers. Swedish media discourses added nuances to the latter source domain by depicting migration as a threat to law and order. There was, however, also a greater tendency in the Swedish news coverage to refer to human beings and document individuals' migratory trajectories. In contrast, German media discourses were prone to refer to anonymous collective categorizations and refrain from covering individual stories. Against this backdrop, structural metaphors alluding to *refugees as commodities* were particularly predominant in German media coverage. On the regional level, both countries' media discourses displayed a tendency to report on migration issues with reference to *migration as burden and pressure*. Despite these subtle differences, the naturalized metaphors we identified as predominant in German and Swedish national and regional media discourses overwhelmingly convey negative connotations. Overall, these naturalized metaphors may in turn influence predispositions regarding readers' interpretations of migration-related events and contribute to corroborating public anxieties. This, in turn, both indicates and reaffirms the shift toward more restrictive immigration policies which occurred in both countries in late 2015.

People can actively use metaphors, for good or for bad, but should at least be careful not to be taken unawares by them. In the ever-ongoing struggle for discursive hegemony, dominant metaphorical depictions are, however slowly, subject to change and redefinition. With a modicum of critical reflection, striving for less dehumanizing depictions of events is both desirable and possible. Indeed, there are several ways in which these predominant metaphorical framings could be transformed over time. A first step toward a more humanized discursive practice is to acknowledge that people are neither objects being imported, processed and redistributed nor flooding or streaming into territories. An increased focus on individuals and their experiences of mobility, regardless of whether they come in great numbers or not, is key in this regard.[115] Furthermore, alternative metaphorical framings may alter readers' predispositions to interpret policies and events. For example, metaphors alluding to water need not necessarily be insinuating and negatively connoted when employed in relation to migration.

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[114]   Charteris-Black 2011, p. 25.

[115]   Bleiker et al. 2013, p. 414.

Indeed, metaphorical framings spotlighting positive aspects such as the influx of human capital and the surge of solidarity could inform media narratives instead.[116]

Apart from transforming the connotations conveyed by the predominant source domains we identified, another way forward may be to consider the following question: What if migration could be understood through completely different metaphors? Here, Lakoff and Johnson's example of *arguments as wars* comes to mind. They contend that the metaphorical framing of verbal arguments along the lines of physical battle, such as defending a point or winning a debate, influences the actions we perform when arguing. It is thus intriguing to take up their invitation:

> Imagine a culture where an argument is viewed as a dance, the participants are seen as performers, and the goal is to perform in a balanced and aesthetically pleasing way. In such a culture, people would view arguments differently, experience them differently, carry them out differently, and talk about them differently.[117]

These deliberations on the effect of shifting the metaphorical focus from war to dance and the subsequent impact on readers lead us to reflect on the implications of a corresponding metaphorical shift about migration. What if German and Swedish news outlets refrained from depicting refugees as commodities or burdens and migration as natural disasters or war-like scenarios? Given the profound influence of metaphors on human thought and action, such a change of metaphors featuring in news concerning asylum seekers and refugees may not only create leeway for more positive ways of framing the issues at stake, but ultimately prompt policymakers to discern alternative policy options and lead readers to think in different directions than the customary ones.

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[116]   Kainz 2016.

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All translations from Swedish and German into English by Lena Kainz and Bo Petersson.