

Assessing surveillance in the European Union migration and asylum policies through MAXQDA

Filiz Kaval

Emrah Zengin

Murat Cingöz

Ramazan İzol

ramazanizol@akdeniz.edu.tr

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Abstract

In recent years, the European Union's (EU) migration and asylum policy has been restructured around border management, security, and data-driven control mechanisms. This process has become a key focus in surveillance studies; migration is increasingly addressed not merely as a legal issue, but as a biopolitical practice of control and confinement in the Foucauldian sense. However, while much research focuses on the conceptual dimensions of surveillance, it addresses the methodological analysis of these discourses only to a limited extent. Qualitative data analysis is critical for unraveling the multilayered structure of discourses on control, security, and disciplinary power. In this context, this article examines texts (reports/news) related to the EU's migration policies using the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis software, proposing a methodology-centered approach. The primary aim is to conduct a methodological analysis of surveillance in EU policies using MAXQDA and to demonstrate the coding processes associated with these power dynamics. Ultimately, the article focuses more on the methodological process that makes these findings possible than on the empirical results themselves.

1 Introduction

The literature on surveillance and migration has undergone a significant evolution and expansion in recent years, centred on the widespread adoption of biometric technologies, the digitalisation of borders, and the increasing transformation of migration into a security-centred policy domain. Research in these fields demonstrates, in particular, that irregular migration is constructed by states as a category of threat and risk, and that the bodies of refugees and migrants are subjected to various practices of control, discipline, surveillance and confinement (45, 47, 51). Indeed, it can be said that the overwhelming majority of the relevant literature consists of macro-level analyses centred on biometric control systems, databases, border technologies and legal regulations (51, 52). Furthermore, a large proportion of existing research addresses migration regimes either through individual case studies or via normative policy documents, and offers only a limited analysis of how the phenomena of control, discipline, confinement and surveillance are produced at the discursive level, and how these discourses form patterns across different institutional texts.

On the other hand, over the past twenty years, the European Union's migration and asylum policies have undergone significant transformations, influenced by both political developments at regional and global levels and digital and technological advances. During this process, there has been a marked tendency to frame forced migration within the context of security threats and criminality; the EU has institutionalised a security-focused approach by integrating migration management with surveillance technologies. Indeed, surveillance technologies encompass physical and digital tools used to record, monitor, analyse and, where necessary, intervene in the movements and behaviour of individuals, communities or large population groups. These technologies are used effectively by both the private sector (*e.g. technology companies, data analytics firms*) and public authorities (*government bodies, security agencies*). Key surveillance tools include biometric systems (*fingerprint readers, iris and retina scanners, facial recognition technologies, voice biometrics*), digital monitoring mechanisms (*GPS and GSM systems for*

location tracking, online data analysis, social media monitoring), physical surveillance infrastructure (closed-circuit television – CCTV), unmanned aerial vehicles (drones), smart city applications (traffic cameras, motion sensors) and big data and AI-supported algorithmic surveillance systems (risk profiling, database integration). Within the framework of the European Union, digital infrastructures such as Eurodac, the Schengen Information System (SIS) and the Visa Information System (VIS) in particular are among the key components of surveillance technologies. Surveillance technologies do not merely serve to monitor and control individuals; they also have the potential to enforce certain behavioural norms, institutionalise disciplinary mechanisms and reproduce processes of social exclusion. Specifically within the EU, surveillance practices and technologies are used extensively, particularly in the context of migration and border management. These practices play a central role in areas such as the identification of individuals, the control of border crossings, the prevention of irregular migration, the identification of security risks, and the assessment of asylum applications. The EU has developed various operational mechanisms that operationalise surveillance technologies within the context of border management and the restructuring of social order. Among these, *Eurodac*, the *Schengen Information System (SIS)*, the *Visa Information System (VIS)*, the *European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS)* and *electronic border gates (e-gates)* stand out. Generally speaking, the EU's surveillance technologies are not merely a means of ensuring border security; they have also become a tool for delineating the boundaries of the political community of European citizenship. These technologies form the infrastructure of an exclusionary political order that determines who is to be included in this community and who is to be excluded. In this context, this article aims to subject the role of surveillance in the EU's migration and asylum policies to a methodological analysis, supported by the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis programme. The MAXQDA programme was used to systematically analyse how the discourse of surveillance is constructed in a layered manner within the texts, which codes interact with one another, and in which contexts these codes are concentrated. The codes and code graphs prepared using the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis programme form the article's fundamental analytical framework. The coding process was carried out along the data-code-analysis axis. In the first stage, texts relating to the EU's migration and asylum policies (reports/news articles) were read line by line using a descriptive coding technique, and recurring discursive patterns, meaning patterns and expressions reflecting surveillance practices were identified within the data. During this process, using MAXQDA's descriptive coding technique, the concepts appearing in the relevant data were directly converted into codes. In the second stage, the relationship between the codes identified through descriptive coding and the coded sentences was analysed. The codes in question were also transferred to a graph using MAXQDA's 'code graph' tool. The proportional distribution of codes in the graph was determined based on the frequency of the code-sentence relationship. The dataset for this article consists of: 1) current news sources and media content, and 2) reports on migration and border management published by Amnesty International and the Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN). Through these texts, a systematic analysis has been conducted of how the EU's migration regime is discursively constructed, which norms are produced, and how the migrant body is transformed into an object of security. Indeed, there are relatively few studies that examine reports on the subject, human rights documents and news content/texts together, and that analyse the discourses of power within these texts through a comparative and

systematic qualitative data analysis. In this context, building on this gap in the literature, this study conducts qualitative content and discourse analysis using the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis software, aiming to fill this gap through this methodology and analysis. In this vein, this article analyses the reports of human rights organisations and related news texts together, revealing how refugees and migrants are represented through the prism of codes of control, confinement, discipline, surveillance and security/threat. Thus, the research not only makes a theoretical contribution to the literature on migration and surveillance; it also offers a methodological approach that enables the systematic visualisation, coding and interpretation of patterns of discursive power. Consequently, in this form, the article makes an original contribution to the critical literature on surveillance-oriented migration regimes by highlighting how migration policies operate not only at the institutional and legal levels but also through processes of knowledge construction and discourse production. Furthermore, the selection of data here is based on the criterion that the texts are directly related to discourses of monitoring, surveillance, security and control. The aim of the dataset is to enable the analysis of surveillance practices through texts with a high discursive density, rather than through quantitative representation. The central research question of this article is: 'Within which discursive frameworks, through which codes, and via which relational structures have the EU's migration and asylum policies been constructed?' The article's central assumption is that, centred on the analysis of these codes and their contexts, the EU's migration and asylum policies are structured as a security regime; the migrant body is reduced to an object of threat that is both monitored and controlled within this regime; furthermore, criminalising, exclusionary and repressive practices directed at migrants are legitimised on the discursive level, and these practices constitute an inclusive technique of power.

2 Theoretical dimension

Modern power's desire to create an 'ideal social order' results in individuals being subjected to constant surveillance, discipline and control mechanisms. In Michel Foucault's analyses, this process points to the construction of a disciplinary society shaped by the domination that modern power exerts over the individual (47). Although the practices of modern power are legitimised through utopian goals and a militaristic understanding of discipline, Foucault essentially defines this situation as a widespread and systematic regime of surveillance (47). Furthermore, the foundation of Foucault's understanding of modern power is formed by the concept of Panoptic Surveillance, or Panopticism, which he developed to explain the functioning of power over the individual and society. This theoretical framework demonstrates that Foucault conceives of power not merely as a legislative force, but as a micro-level mechanism of control operating through individuals' bodies and behaviours. Furthermore, Panopticism is not merely a structure that controls individuals' behaviour; it is also a technology of power that plays a role in the construction of the modern subject and the reshaping of society according to modern norms (47, 56). On the other hand, biopolitics, in Foucault's terms, refers to forms of knowledge production and intervention directed at the life processes of an entire population, as distinct from the classical disciplinary practices of power over individuals (46). Within this framework, biopolitics constitutes the totality of techniques applied for the preservation, regulation and optimisation of life (46, 53). Indeed,

according to Foucault's conceptualisation of biopolitics, modern forms of power target not only individuals' intellectual or ideological orientations, but also their bodies and lives directly (50). In this sense, power positions the body both as an object of discipline and as a biological entity that must be regulated. Here, the body is not merely a sphere over which to exert control; it is also a tool that power transforms in order to increase efficiency, strengthen manageability and ensure social order (50). In this context, this article examines the phenomena of control, surveillance, confinement and securitisation within current migration regimes through the lens of Foucault's concept of power and modern power practices. Furthermore, according to Foucault, power is not merely a structure that exercises coercion or violence; it is also a relational and multi-layered set of practices that produces norms, subjectivities and knowledge. In this context, modern power possesses a rationality that governs the individual's life through the logic of security, regulates populations and disciplines bodies. Furthermore, concepts used in the article—such as 'surveillance', 'confinement', 'discipline' and 'laboratory of power'—are grounded in Foucault's understanding of biopolitics and disciplinary power. In Foucault's framework, disciplinary power refers to the control of individual bodies through constant discipline, surveillance, classification and normalisation; whilst the phenomenon of confinement denotes the spaces where such control is institutionalised spatially (deportation centres, border zones, surveillance centres, camps, etc.). Consequently, these spaces function as laboratories of power where the individual's body is constantly monitored, disciplined, managed and measured. Indeed, according to Foucault, the migrant body is transformed into an object of security. This situation is particularly linked to Foucault's understanding of biopolitics. This is because biopolitical power regulates life by addressing the population through practices of threat, security and risk; and within this framework, migration is securitised—not so much as a form of human mobility, but rather through discourses of risk, disorder and potential threat. In this context, the body of the asylum seeker or migrant is redefined not as a subject requiring protection, but as a security issue that must be monitored and kept under control. Furthermore, this theoretical perspective reveals that the codes of "surveillance", "discipline", "confinement", "control" and "security/threat" – are not coincidental; on the contrary, they form a consistent pattern within the disciplinary conception of power and the biopolitical practices of current migration regimes. Thus, the article presents a critical analytical framework that reveals how power operates at the micro-level, rather than focusing on normative discourses regarding migration practices and policies.

3 Methodological dimension: MAXQDA-based coding

In qualitative research, 'coding' refers to the process of attempting to describe the available data using a single concept or word. An assessment is carried out based on the data in question, and the scope and meaning of the data are narrowed down. In this way, the message intended to be conveyed is articulated through a single code (concept/word). Furthermore, the data required for coding is predominantly drawn from academic and fictional literature, documents, observation notes, interview transcripts, drawings, videos and websites (54). Coding refers to the process of collecting and analysing data, as well as the crucial link between them (23, 54). Coding involves the exploration of a situation or topic for which there is no clear formula or algorithm (54). In qualitative data analysis, the data being coded may consist of a

long text or even a single sentence. On the other hand, coding is largely shaped by the researcher's personal characteristics and tendencies. Here, the researcher interprets the available data and subsequently carries out the coding. In this context, researchers' interpretations of the data from different perspectives may yield different codes. Whilst coding is generally a judgement-based process, there is no single 'correct' approach (54). Coding typically refers to the process of identifying and labelling a text or a sentence under an appropriate code. Furthermore, in coding, the existing data is not merely reduced in terms of volume; it is also summarised, thereby imparting a more associative quality to the data (54). In this context, according to researcher Johnny Saldana, coding *means "placing something within a systematic order, making something part of a system or a classification, and categorising it. When codes are applied repeatedly to qualitative data, coding has taken place. This is the process that allows data to be divided, grouped, reorganised and linked in order to reinforce meaning and develop explanations"* (54). In qualitative research, the coding process is nowadays mostly carried out using "Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS)". Some of these software programmes include MAXQDA, CAT, QDA Miner and Atlas.ti. Thanks to these programmes, data is stored properly, the data analysis process is simplified, and coding is carried out systematically. However, these qualitative data analysis programmes do not perform automatic coding; instead, the researcher carries out the coding based on the codes they have defined (54). Furthermore, there are numerous types of coding used in qualitative data analysis. Some of these include: Conceptual Coding, Value Coding, Descriptive Coding, Structural Coding, Process Coding, In Vivo Coding and Pre-coding. In this context, one of these coding types—and the one most suitable for the coding process in this study—is descriptive coding, where the main subject of a sentence, paragraph or text is described using a single word or summarised in a short phrase. The primary aim of descriptive coding is to attempt to convey to the reader what has been heard or seen using a single word. In this context, this article has been prepared within the framework of discourse-based content analysis and qualitative research methods. Texts (reports/news articles) relating to the EU's migration and asylum policies have been analysed with the aim of revealing the discursively constructed mechanisms of security, threat and control. Proceeding from the assumption that the phenomenon of surveillance is produced through texts, a critical discourse analysis approach was adopted; this approach was systematised using the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis programme. Critical discourse analysis is positioned in this article not as a theoretical field of discussion, but as an analytical method. The aim is to reveal how the relationships between surveillance and power are established in the texts, around which concepts they are centred, and through which discursive patterns they are normalised. Furthermore, the article's data set comprises reports prepared by various EU institutions on migration and asylum, as well as selected news articles addressing the EU's migration and asylum policies. The selection of data is based on the criterion that the texts are directly related to discourses of surveillance, monitoring, security and control. The purpose of the dataset is to enable the analysis of surveillance practices through texts with a high degree of discursive density, rather than through quantitative representation. The dataset used in this article was compiled using the purposive sampling method, with the aim of revealing how the phenomena of surveillance and migration are constructed at the discursive level. Indeed, the purposive sampling method was chosen because it allows for the acquisition of in-depth information and is the most appropriate method for the research

objective. Here, the purposive sampling method is significant as it allows for the selection of texts that are directly related to the research questions and are more informative. Furthermore, the data sources/set consist of 42 texts. Of these, 21 are reports compiled by human rights organisations, whilst the remaining 21 are news articles and documents related to the subject. Furthermore, the reason for analysing 42 texts in this article is to fulfil the criteria of qualitative saturation and discursive repetition rather than quantitative representativeness. In this context, the analysis of the texts was carried out using the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis software through a multi-stage coding process; in the first stage, concepts emerging from the texts were coded via descriptive coding; in the second stage, these codes (such as supervision, control, discipline, exclusion, security/threat and norm) were linked to the theoretical framework and subjected to axial coding (by rotating them around an axis). This process was repeated continuously and the coding process was advanced; however, although new texts were added to the coding, no new codes emerged. Instead, the existing codes began to repeat themselves solely in terms of context and frequency. Consequently, this indicates that the existing data sources (news articles/reports) were sufficient and that the dataset had reached theoretical saturation. Furthermore, the code graph table generated via MAXQDA provides a breakdown of the stable and recurring nature of the codes. The code graph table, which includes the proportional distribution of all codes, was also interpreted and analysed, revealing the interrelationships between the codes. The fact that this relational structure is reproduced in a similar manner in both civil society reports and media news items demonstrates that the 42 texts are analytically sufficient. In this context, the limitation of data sources in this study is not a methodological shortcoming but rather a conscious choice, in keeping with the nature of qualitative research, which prioritises consistency, depth and discursive explicitness. The aim here is to reveal how discourse operates and through which recurring discursive mechanisms power relations are established. In this context, the 42 texts provide a sufficient analytical foundation from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. Furthermore, these 42 texts predominantly cover the years 2021–2024. Indeed, it can be argued that during these years, the EU's migration and asylum policies became increasingly centred on border technologies, irregular migration was framed as a security threat, and, in this context, securitisation became institutionalised. It can also be argued that during this period, as a result of the EU's migration policies, border violence and pushbacks intensified, whilst reporting on surveillance practices increased significantly. Furthermore, the reason for relying predominantly on reports from the Border Violence Monitoring Network (BMVN) and Amnesty International in this article is that both civil society organisations engage in systematic reporting, regularly document human rights violations committed by the European border regime, and produce field-based data. Furthermore, these organisations generally produce a critical counter-narrative and a rights-based discourse in opposition to state-centred security discourses. Consequently, the alignment of these organisations' approach with the article's theoretical framework has ensured that their reports are utilised as sources. In this context, the reports prepared by these organisations—which highlight border violence, surveillance, human rights violations and the security discourse—have provided high analytical value for discursive analysis and have constituted important data sources for this article. Furthermore, news content from BBC News and Euronews has predominantly been selected as news sources for this article. The reason for this is that the legitimising discourse surrounding the EU's migration policies and practices is disseminated to a

wide audience through these news sources. Furthermore, news searches were conducted in English to access this news content, with themes such as 'border control', 'pushbacks', 'asylum-seekers', 'EU border security', 'migration crisis' and 'irregular migration' being predominantly selected. The news content selected for this article was identified from among texts that address the field of migration and asylum through the prism of discourses on threat, crisis, security and control, and which legitimise or normalise border policies and regimes. This has made it possible to analyse the discursive discontinuities and continuities between institutional security policies and media discourse. Furthermore, the article has methodological limitations. The methodological limitation here lies in the fact that the data set consists of a limited number of purpose-selected documents. However, this methodological constraint is not a shortcoming but a conscious methodological choice inherent to the nature of critical discourse analysis and qualitative analysis. Indeed, the article seeks here, in particular, to highlight discursive depth and to reveal the connection between knowledge, discourse and power, rather than making quantitative generalisations. Apart from all this, the coding process has been structured in line with the conceptual framework frequently used in the literature on surveillance studies. In this context, the key codes used in the analysis are as follows: Security/Threat, Surveillance/Monitoring, Identity/Exclusion, Discipline/Supervision/Control Systems, Norm/Power Laboratory, Oppression and Shutting.

3.1 A code-based analysis of the EU's migration and asylum policy

The data presented in this section of the article were obtained by coding and analysing texts relating to the EU's migration and asylum policies using MAXQDA. Here, data drawn first from various news sources (*21 news articles*) and secondly from reports prepared by various sources (*21 reports*) were coded using MAXQDA's descriptive coding technique, subsequently analysed and presented in graphical form. The findings emerging from the analysis of the texts in this article reveal the discursive frameworks within which migration and asylum are constructed, the codes through which they are articulated, and the relational structures involved. In this context, these findings should be regarded as the outputs of the analytical process rather than empirical observations.

3.1.1 Analysis of news texts on the EU's migration and asylum policy and related codes

This section presents the analysis, coding and graphical representation of 21 news articles on the EU's migration and asylum policy, sourced from various outlets. The relevant news articles were coded using seven codes (*Security/Threat, Discipline/Control, Identity/Exclusion, Surveillance/Monitoring, Norm/Power Laboratory, Oppression and Shutting*), with each sentence within the text assessed individually. Furthermore, the analysis of the 'code (word/concept)' associated with the relevant sentence – and the analysis of the sentence itself were carried out in accordance with methodological principles (*MAXQDA and critical discourse analysis*).

Code analysis:

1) Security/Threat Code. News articles analysed: *VOA Turkish, 2023; BBC Turkish, 2023; Euronews Turkish, 2023; Euronews.com, 2023; Euronews.com, 2024; Europa.eu, 2023; Europa.eu., 2024*. In this context, an examination of Fig. 3.1 reveals that the most frequently recurring code in the news texts, at a rate of 36 per cent (32 occurrences), is 'Security/Threat'. The data indicates that the phenomenon of migration is framed not merely as a humanitarian crisis, but as a direct "European issue" (27, 55) and a security threat. The resumption of border controls within the Schengen area on the grounds of a "serious threat to internal security or public policy" (33, 34) is the clearest example of this. The fact that countries cite factors such as "the threat of arms smuggling" (33, 35), "Middle Eastern terrorism" (33, 36) and "organised crime" (33, 40) as justifications demonstrates that migrants are being equated with a potential criminal profile. Poland's announcement that it would "deploy 10,000 troops as a deterrent" (28, 33) to its border with Belarus, meanwhile, lays bare the militarised dimension of border security. This rhetoric is reinforced by digital surveillance mechanisms. New legislative measures emphasise that systems will be established to record "whether an individual poses a security threat by adding facial images to fingerprints... including children over the age of six" (2, 28). Meanwhile, the media is fostering a dual perception of security based on migrants' ethnic origins. Whilst it is reported that Ukrainians are being accommodated on ferries described as "temporarily converted into floating vessels" (30, 31) and "turned into a floating hotel" (31, 37); when it comes to migrants from the Middle East and Africa, experts' observation that "migrants are forcibly turned back as they approach European borders" (32, 39) reveals just how selectively the perception of threat is constructed. Furthermore, the following phrases evoking a security/threat narrative appear in the relevant news articles: "illegal migration" (27, 33), "border security" (41), "border controls" (41), "terrorism" (33, 34), "migrant smuggling" (32), "screening regulation" (42), "the issue of African and Middle Eastern migrants" (32, 35) and "migration towards EU borders as a result of the Ukraine-Russia War" (28, 31) were assessed under the security/threat code and coded accordingly. Here, the security/threat code was used frequently in the context of migration and asylum. In the texts, migration movements are linked to border security, public order and social stability, serving as the basis for the legitimacy of surveillance and control measures. MAXQDA's code analysis revealed that the 'security/threat' code is frequently used in close association with the 'surveillance/monitoring' and 'discipline/control' codes. This analytically highlights how surveillance practices are normalised within the migration sector through a preventive security discourse.

2) Discipline/Control Systems Code. News articles analysed: *VOA Turkish, 2023; BBC Turkish, 2023; Euronews Turkish, 2023; Europa.eu, 2023; Europa.eu, 2024; Euronews Turkish, 2024*. Within this framework, the 'Discipline/Supervision/Control Systems' code, which emerges as the second most frequent discourse in Fig. 3.1 with a 29 per cent share (26 occurrences), demonstrates that the EU has placed migration management under a strict bureaucratic and technological regime. Provisions in the New Pact on Migration and Asylum envisaging "tighter control over migrant arrivals and closed centres near borders" (44, 55), and the mandatory identity checks under the "Screening Regulation" (41, 55), are clear examples of this discipline. The Pact's introduction of a rule requiring countries that do not accept asylum seekers to pay "a per-person contribution (20,000 euros)" (2, 29) reveals that the process is being

conducted according to a logic of financial control. Biometric systems form the digital component of this mechanism. The processing of those arriving in Europe into the EU database, “with facial images added to fingerprints to include children over the age of six” (2, 44, 55), demonstrates that the migrant body is being forced into systemic compliance. Furthermore, the fact that many countries have suspended the Schengen Agreement and reintroduced internal border controls on the grounds of a “serious threat to internal security or public policy” (25, 33, 44) proves that control has been militarised. The granting of authority to “border police to carry out body searches and use electronic surveillance” (29, 33, 44) in Sweden, and Frontex’s announcement that it will “triple” its personnel at external borders (41), confirm that the EU is externalising its control mechanisms. Similarly, concepts and phrases such as “bringing under control” (38, 44), “asylum policy” (25, 41), “border control” (29, 41), “pacts and agreements” (38, 44) and “legal regulations” (25, 44) appearing in the relevant news texts have been assessed within the scope of the EU’s disciplinary/control activities, and the relevant sentences have been coded under the disciplinary/control code. On the other hand, in texts relating to migration and asylum policies, the discourse of discipline and control is constructed through the standardisation of application processes, the enforcement of compliance with rules, and the continuous monitoring of such compliance. In this context, the ‘control systems’ code focuses on the emphasis placed on databases, registration mechanisms and administrative procedures. MAXQDA’s code analysis has revealed the relationship between discipline/control and control systems. This relationship demonstrates that migration management is structured through automated and systemic mechanisms rather than individual assessments.

3) Identity/Exclusion Code. News articles analysed: *BBC Turkish*, 2023; *Euronews.com*, 2023; *Europa.eu*, 2023. In light of this information, the ‘Identity/Exclusion’ code, which ranks third in Fig. 3.1 with a 17 per cent share (15 occurrences), indicates that individuals are subject to a hierarchical filtering system based on their ethnic affiliations within EU migration policies. Statements in the news reports such as “Asylum seekers from relatively safe countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Morocco and Algeria will be held in closed centres where freedom of movement is restricted” (2) reveal that identity functions directly as a tool of restriction. In political discourse, too, the boundaries of exclusion are drawn with the emphasis that “it is Europeans, not people-smugglers, who will decide who can come to and stay in the EU” (2, 29). The most striking manifestation of identity-based exclusion in news texts is the double standard that is applied. The approach of European states, which, following Russia’s invasion, “temporarily allocated passenger ships to accommodate Ukrainians fleeing to safe havens” (27, 31), stands in stark contrast to the securitising rhetoric aimed at “stopping the flow of Middle Eastern and African migrants towards its borders, which it claims is encouraged by Moscow” (31, 34). The criticism voiced by an expert that “they did not treat those fleeing war and oppression in Syria and Afghanistan in the same way” (26, 35) confirms this racial discrimination. An African migrant’s account that “it was very difficult because they don’t like Black people” (26, 36) and the statements that “they arbitrarily detained Haitian asylum-seekers and subjected them to degrading and ill-treatment. They subjected them to racially motivated torture” (26, 40) demonstrate the extent to which exclusion based on identity has reached. Consequently, sentences in the relevant news texts containing concepts or situations such as “religion/belief”, “ethnic origin” and “EU citizen” (25, 42) were evaluated within the framework of the identity/exclusion code and coded accordingly. In the migration and asylum

texts in question, identity is constructed through discourses that classify individuals under legal and administrative categories. Here, categories such as ‘refugee’, ‘asylum seeker’ or ‘irregular migrant’ function not only as descriptive labels but also as tools of management and control. These expressions were flagged under the ‘identity’ code in MAXQDA; descriptive coding analysis also revealed that this code was frequently used in conjunction with the exclusion and security/threat codes. This analytical relationship highlights how the positioning of certain groups as non-compliant or high-risk is produced at the discursive level.

4) Surveillance/Monitoring Code. News articles analysed: *BBC Turkish, 2023; Euronews Turkish, 2023; Euronews.com, 2023; Europa.eu, 2023; Europa.eu, 2024*. In this context, the ‘Surveillance/Monitoring’ code, which accounts for 8 per cent (7 occurrences) as shown in Fig. 3.1, reveals how the border regime is institutionalised through technological monitoring mechanisms. The identification of those arriving “including children over the age of 6, by adding facial images to fingerprints” (2, 42) and the fact that this information will be “processed into the EU database” (2) indicates that the system goes beyond local surveillance to establish a continent-wide, integrated panoptic regime. The fact that the system is designed so that “it will be possible to check whether a person has applied for asylum in more than one EU country” (2) confirms that surveillance functions as an administrative tool for maintaining public order. Surveillance practices are presented as a prerequisite for accessing the right to asylum. Statements such as “those entering the EU by irregular means will be subject to identity verification, biometric data collection and a mandatory pre-entry screening procedure for up to seven days” (2, 42) substantiate this situation. The fact that surveillance ultimately results in punitive mechanisms is supported by data indicating that in Slovakia, “approximately 500 per cent more migrants have been detained” (33) and reports of “inhuman treatment and widespread police violence” in “detention centres” in Greece (24). Indeed, in the news articles in question, sentences containing concepts such as “monitoring mechanism”, “fingerprinting”, “electronic surveillance” and “detention centres” have been assessed within the scope of the surveillance/monitoring code and coded accordingly. Here, the surveillance/monitoring code in texts on migration and asylum focuses on discourses that refer to the continuous recording of individuals’ movements, application processes and legal statuses. The texts emphasise the monitoring of border crossings, the tracking of applications via digital systems and the sharing of personal data between different institutions. The code distribution analysis conducted within this framework reveals that surveillance is presented not as an exceptional measure in migration management, but as a continuous and institutionalised practice.

5) Norm/Power Laboratory Code. News texts included in the coding: *VOA Turkish, 2023; BBC Turkish, 2023; Europa.eu, 2023; Europa.eu, 2024*. Within this dataset, the ‘Norm/Power Laboratory’ code, which stands out in Fig. 3.1 with a 6 per cent share (5 occurrences), indicates that the EU frames migration management as a testing ground for new legal instruments. The Migration and Asylum Pact, as reported in the news and which determines “how the management of asylum and migration flows is to be shared among Member States” (55), is the clearest example of this laboratory function. The consolidation of regulations such as the “Screening Regulation” and the “Eurodac Regulation” (42) into a single package centred on “five key proposals” brings to light the complex infrastructure established by the authorities. With these new norms, it is stated that “all criteria for entry into EU territory are being tightened” (55) and “processing and return times are being accelerated” (55), thereby reducing the right to asylum to a technical routine.

The fact that countries which do not accept asylum seekers “will pay 20,000 euros per asylum seeker” (2), reduces the migrant body to a financial quota; whilst the updating of Frontex’s activities “in conjunction with an Action Plan” (41) confirms that control practices are constantly being legitimised through legal frameworks (norms). Consequently, sentences or contexts in the relevant news texts containing phrases such as “law, treaty provisions/decisions, statutes, regulations, parliament and commission” have been assessed and coded within the framework of the ‘norm/power laboratory’ code. It can be argued that these texts indirectly define acceptable behaviours and suitable applicant profiles, and that the field of migration is constructed as an experimental governance arena where new practices are tested. By making these limited yet strategic discourses visible, MAXQDA has demonstrated at an analytical level that migration and asylum are not merely a field where existing rules are applied, but a sphere of power where new surveillance techniques are produced.

6) Oppression Code. Relevant news texts analysed: *Euronews.com*, 2023. In this context, the ‘Oppression’ code, which accounts for 4 per cent (4 occurrences) in Fig. 3.1, illustrates the media discourse’s reflection of coercive practices. The texts reveal that repression also involves racist practices. Whilst Ukrainians are welcomed with open arms, statements such as “Haitian asylum-seekers were arbitrarily detained, subjected to degrading and ill-treatment. Racialised torture was carried out” (26) prove that oppression is a tool of exclusionary violence. The report that “a hunger strike has begun following allegations of inhumane treatment and widespread police violence at a detention centre in Greece” (24) confirms this systematic violence. The report states that officials are accused of “failing to provide asylum seekers with sufficient food, hot water and medication, and of housing them in filthy cells infested with cockroaches” (24), the fact that these officials report that migrants’ “mobile devices are routinely confiscated and their cameras smashed” (24) lays bare the extent of the severe physical and psychological pressure they face. Indeed, expressions such as “ill-treatment”, “racially motivated torture”, “housing in filthy cells”, “inhuman treatment” and “the smashing of mobile devices” appearing in the relevant news articles have been assessed within the scope of the oppression code and coded accordingly. Furthermore, in texts on migration and asylum, the oppression code focuses on coercive practices, the restriction of individuals’ movements and their classification as ‘the other’. In this context, the code analysis demonstrates that oppression is not an exceptional practice in migration management; rather, modern governance presents the application of oppressive measures as a continuous practice within the framework of border security and the security of EU citizens.

7) Shutting Code. News texts analysed: *Euronews.com*, 2023. Although the ‘Confinement’ code appears in Fig. 3.1 with a frequency of 1 (1 per cent), it presents a striking qualitative finding, highlighting the severity of the physical conditions in which migrants’ freedoms are restricted. The detention practices reflected in the news reports show that asylum seekers are being held in isolation in conditions that violate human dignity. The fact that asylum seekers who went on hunger strike accused the authorities of “failing to provide them with sufficient food, hot water and medication, and of housing them in filthy cells infested with cockroaches” (24) proves that confinement serves not merely as an administrative measure, but as a direct form of punishment. In particular, the phrase “housing them in filthy cells” used in the relevant news article has been assessed within the framework of the shutting code and coded accordingly. Here, the shutting code centres on the restriction of an individual’s freedom, their detention in closed centres and their exposure to coercive practices. The code

analysis demonstrates that shutting practices constitute one of the surveillance techniques. Indeed, it can be argued that modern governance assesses these migrants/asylum seekers in the context of public order and border security, and consequently keeps them under surveillance, thereby creating a legitimate basis for such surveillance practices.

3.1.2 Analysis of reports on the EU's migration and asylum policy and related codes

This section of the article presents the analysis, coding and graphical representation of 21 reports on the EU's migration and asylum policy, drawn from various sources. The relevant reports were coded using seven categories (*Security/Threat, Discipline/Control, Identity/Exclusion, Surveillance/Monitoring, Norm/Power Laboratory, Oppression and Shutting*), with each sentence within the reports assessed individually. Furthermore, the analysis of the relevant 'code (word/concept)' associated with the sentence in question and the sentence itself was carried out in accordance with methodological principles (*MAXQDA and critical discourse analysis*).

Code analysis:

1) Identity/Exclusion Code. Relevant reports in which this coding was applied: *Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN), 2024; BVMN, 2023; BVMN, 2022; Amnesty.org.tr, 2021*. In the context of this information, the 'Identity/Exclusion' code, which has the highest rate (32 per cent) in Fig. 3.2, demonstrates that border management has been transformed into a systematic tool of violence and control. Reports by the BVMN and Amnesty International prove that border controls turn the migrant's body into an object of dehumanising punishment. Violations targeting privacy are striking; forcing migrants to "stand barefoot in the snow for approximately 45 minutes" (5, 16, 18) and to "run with their hands above their heads for what felt like five hours" (5, 16, 18) lays bare the systematic abuse being inflicted (5, 16, 18). A refugee's statement, "They forced me to strip completely naked... My wife and children were there too, and they saw me like that" (16, 18, 19), demonstrates how the violence transforms into psychological dehumanisation. Isolation practices continue by severing migrants' ties to the outside world and their legal rights. Whilst devices are smashed and documents destroyed; "Before boarding the bus, I showed my asylum seeker identity document to the police. But they took my ID and tore it up" (5, 16, 19), demonstrates that legal status is arbitrarily disregarded. Violations during the lockdown are confirmed by the Amnesty International report: "Later, we heard shouting and screaming from the neighbouring cells. They took people out of their cells one by one until the sounds stopped completely" (1, 5, 16). This cycle of violence is legitimised by racist rhetoric that categorises migrants on the basis of their ethnic origin. Concrete examples of this include statements by law enforcement officers such as "Croatia belongs to Croats, not Moroccans" (5, 12, 16) and "This is my country and I don't want you here either" (1, 5, 12). Statements that normalise violence, such as "This is Hungary's gift to you" (1, 5, 16) and "This isn't a hotel; when you go to Turkey, you'll go there to sleep too" (1, 4, 16), reinforce othering. The double standards produced by the system are strikingly reflected in a refugee's outcry: "Why can white people enter but black people can't? It was so racist... I thought Europe was a country of democracy and human

rights” (4, 16, 18). Consequently, sentences in the relevant reports referring to situations such as “beating” (5, 16, 20), “pushback” (16, 18), “inhuman treatment” (1, 12), “skin colour” (16), “religion and belief” (12) and “ethnic origin” (18) have been assessed within the framework of the identity/exclusion code and coded accordingly. In migration and asylum reports, the identity code has been constructed by classifying individuals under categories such as ethnic origin and skin colour. Here, the classification of these individuals not only as asylum seekers, refugees and irregular migrants but also under categories such as ethnic origin and skin colour serves not only as a descriptive tool but also as a means of control and management. The statements flagged under the ‘identity code’ in MAXQDA have, through multiple coding analysis, frequently been found to be used in conjunction with codes relating to exclusion and security/threat. This analytical relationship reveals how the positioning of certain groups as risky or non-conforming is produced at the discursive level.

2) Oppression Code. Relevant reports analysed: *Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN)*, 2024; *BVMN*, 2023; *BVMN*, 2022; *Amnesty.org.tr*, 2021. Within the scope of this information, the ‘Oppression’ discourse, which ranks second with a 25 per cent share in Fig. 3.2, highlights the systematic nature of the violence applied in border management. The reports show that severe physical and psychological violence is resorted to directly, without even allowing an asylum claim to be made. Beatings carried out using batons, stun guns and dogs paint a grim picture, as illustrated by one asylum seeker’s account: “For an hour and a half, we were subjected to constant beatings and torture whilst drowning in our own blood” (12, 19, 21). The statement, “They hit me on the head and blood came from my ear... I can’t see very well out of that eye; everything is blurry now” (1, 18, 19, 20), serves as evidence of the lasting damage caused by physical coercion. These coercive practices are further underpinned by a strategy of deprivation that targets human dignity. The smashing of mobile phones, the burning of documents and strip searches in the snow are used as means of control that humiliate the body. This is reflected in statements such as: “They forced me to strip completely naked; they even made me take off my underwear...” (1, 18, 19, 20). The detention of migrants in cells and the mockery they face following electroshock treatment—with remarks such as “This is Hungary’s gift to you” (1, 4, 18, 19)—reinforce the psychological dimension of the coercive policies being implemented. Indeed, in the relevant reports, statements referring to situations such as “forced return” (18, 19, 20, 21), “ill-treatment” (18, 19, 20), “inhuman treatment” (1, 18, 20), “beating” (1, 18, 19, 20) and “violence” (1, 12, 19, 21) have been assessed within the framework of the ‘oppression code’ and coded accordingly. The analysis conducted here, centred on the oppression code, demonstrates that this code is linked to themes of surveillance, control and exclusion. In the EU’s migration and asylum policies, coercive practices are often carried out directly, and at other times indirectly. The coercive practices arising from surveillance and control measures define a comprehensive governance logic that operates in tandem with the EU’s mechanisms of surveillance, exclusion and control.

3) Discipline/Supervision/Control Systems Code. Relevant reports included in the coding: *Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN)*, 2024; *BVMN*, 2023; *BVMN*, 2022. In this context, the ‘Discipline/Supervision/Control Systems’ code, which accounts for 15 per cent (20 occurrences) in Fig. 3.2, reveals how migrant mobility is being restricted by an intensive militarised network. The incidents reflected in the reports demonstrate that border management has been transformed into a fully-fledged security operation. Along the border, groups are sometimes encountered by teams wearing “dark-coloured uniforms and balaclavas” (17, 19), whilst at

other times by units using vehicles “bearing the word ‘Policija’” or displaying the word “Intervention” (17, 19), reflecting the diversity of control mechanisms. Accounts such as “we were met by 15 armed Hungarian officers” (13, 17) and “they were wearing balaclavas and two dogs caught up with us” (15, 17) – such accounts reflect the level of violence to which the surveillance has escalated. Migrants’ bodies are subjected to a cycle of punishment through administrative and technological surveillance mechanisms. The use of “thermal imaging cameras and binoculars by Frontex officers to search for people at night” (11, 13) illustrates the technological phase of this surveillance; the recording of groups in transit centres, where “their fingerprints and photographs were taken” (11, 15), demonstrates the bureaucratic phase. Repeated pushbacks are the most striking consequence of this system; indeed, a refugee’s statement that they were “pushed back seven times from Albania to Greece... three times by Frontex officers and four times by Albanian police officers” (7, 11) demonstrates that human mobility has been reduced to a mechanical routine. In particular, sentences in the relevant reports containing or evoking terms such as “border controls” (13, 15), “border surveillance” (11), “bringing under control” (19), “border control tools” (17), “border police” (7) and “border surveillance systems” have been assessed under the discipline/surveillance/control systems code and coded accordingly. Discourse analysis conducted using MAXQDA demonstrates that surveillance, control systems and discipline constitute a continuous and centralised administrative logic within the EU’s migration and asylum policies. In the reports analysed, discipline is established through administrative regulations that restrict individuals’ mobility and mandate compliance with specific procedures. Asylum application processes, biometric data collection practices, registration systems and status determination mechanisms function as disciplinary tools that regulate not only migrants’ legal status but also their everyday practices. Descriptive coding carried out using MAXQDA reveals that, whilst these regulations are often presented as neutral and technical procedures, they generate a powerful logic of control at the discursive level. On the other hand, code analysis indicates that the concept of control is particularly concentrated around border management systems and digital databases. Here, the ‘control’ code emerges as a complementary element operating alongside control and discipline. MAXQDA’s code analysis and contextual analyses reveal that the discourse of control is brought to the fore particularly as a result of the ‘security’ and ‘threat’ codes. Overall, the MAXQDA-supported analysis demonstrates that surveillance, control systems and disciplinary practices are not independent of one another within the EU’s migration and asylum policies, but rather form a holistic and intertwined structure of power. 4)

Surveillance/Monitoring Code. Relevant reports used for coding: *Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN), 2023; BVMN, 2022*. Within this dataset, the ‘Surveillance/Monitoring’ code, which accounts for 12 per cent (16 occurrences) in Fig. 3.2, indicates that border controls have transformed into a technological and physical network that keeps migrants constantly visible and traps them. The reports reveal that surveillance operates seamlessly from forests to public spaces. Statements by police officers such as “we were monitoring you via the cameras” (11, 19) and accounts of how migrants were “caught via security cameras at the bus terminal” (11) prove that public spaces have been transformed into digital surveillance spaces. This surveillance regime is being intensified by Frontex’s high-tech tools. Statements indicating that “Frontex officers use thermal imaging cameras and binoculars at night...” (11) and that a vehicle “with a large antenna on it... helped them detect” people on the roads (19) confirm this

aspect. Surveillance also serves as a strategic ambush; statements describing how police “stop to observe just behind the border” (11), “spotted them from a distance with thermal binoculars before they even crossed the border” (11), and “waited for them to cross the border and then lured them into a trap” (11), reveal that surveillance is a punitive apprehension tactic. The registration process, whereby the fingerprints and photographs of apprehended migrants were immediately taken (11, 19), constitutes the biometric dimension of surveillance. Accounts stating that, whilst in detention, they saw “an officer in military uniform observing the camp from a container” (11) indicate that this panoptic system is uninterrupted at every stage. Indeed, in the relevant reports, phrases such as “law enforcement tracking, surveillance and control” (11, 19), “detention” (11, 19) and “technological surveillance practices and tools” (11) were assessed under the surveillance/monitoring code and coded accordingly. The analysis, conducted using the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis programme, demonstrates that the surveillance/monitoring code is one of the main codes in the EU’s migration and asylum policies. Upon examining the code relationships in the analysis, it is evident that the surveillance/monitoring theme permeates almost all the analysed texts and exhibits a high degree of interconnection with other codes. Indeed, this situation demonstrates that surveillance is not merely a secondary element of the EU’s migration management but also a technique of power that determines the fundamental operational logic of migration and asylum policies. On the other hand, during the descriptive coding process, surveillance/monitoring was not limited to physical monitoring practices carried out at border lines; it was coded within a broad semantic field encompassing digital recording systems, biometric data collection, cross-database integration and risk profiling applications. Contextual analyses conducted using MAXQDA reveal that surveillance is often presented as an objective, impartial and technical process; however, at the discursive level, it produces a regime of control in which individuals are constantly rendered visible. Consequently, the MAXQDA-supported analysis demonstrates that the surveillance/monitoring code constitutes a fundamental technique of power that is a constant feature of the EU’s migration and asylum policies. The code analysis systematically reveals how surveillance is normalised at the discursive level and legitimised by being presented as a technical necessity. 5)

Security/Threat Code. Relevant reports analysed: *Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN), 2024; BVMN, 2023; BVMN, 2022*. In this context, the ‘Security/Threat’ code, which accounts for 10 per cent (13 occurrences) in Fig. 3.2, reveals that the framing of migrants as a potential risk has led to the routinisation of emergency practices. The reports describe border crossings as constituting a breach of public order, noting that groups were “stopped just behind the border to observe” (12) or were apprehended by teams “surrounded by 15 armed Hungarian officers” (22). The account that “a Syrian man tried to escape, whereupon the police beat him” (22) is accompanied by an account of “a group of men wearing ski masks and dark-coloured uniforms, along with two dogs” (6) who then subdued the migrants “by the police officers’ dogs, which bit them hard on the legs and hands” (15), demonstrate that the threat was being met with violent force. This security regime makes no distinction even among the most vulnerable groups; the statement that “after a short but terrifying journey during which the driver was driving very fast, everyone—including the person’s blind husband and two children—was pushed back” (9) sums this up. The perception of threat is evolving into processes where migrants are recorded in a militarised environment, with reports that “phones were destroyed” (BVMN, 2023e) and “fingerprints

and photographs were taken" (11) at transit centres. Statements referring to "an official wearing a military uniform with a German flag on his arm" (11) confirm military oversight. Whilst the system creates a vicious cycle in which individuals are "detained three times by Frontex officers and four times by Albanian police officers" (7), practices where people are turned away with the statement "We don't need you; we don't want you in our country" (19) concretise the exclusionary nature of the security discourse. Consequently, sentences in the relevant reports that contain or evoke expressions such as 'risk', 'border controls', 'border security', 'threat', 'security threats', 'people heading for the borders', 'apprehended as a result of controls' and 'pushed back' (3, 8) have been assessed within the security/threat code and coded accordingly. The analysis, conducted using the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis programme, demonstrates that the security/threat code is one of the fundamental axes establishing the discursive framework in the EU's migration and asylum policies. The code analysis shows that this code recurs intensively throughout the dataset and establishes strong associative links, particularly with the codes for surveillance, coercion, control and classification. This suggests that the security discourse is not merely a tool for political justification, but functions as the founding logic of migration management. During the descriptive coding process, the security/threat theme was coded alongside concepts such as irregular migration, public order, border security, crime and social stability. MAXQDA contextual analyses reveal that, in most texts, asylum seekers and migrants are associated with potential risk factors, whilst the phenomenon of migration is framed as an extraordinary, controllable and exceptional situation. This discursive structure ensures that migrant subjects are incorporated into the security sphere and transformed into objects of political concern. In the analysis, the security/threat discourse serves to legitimise practices of exclusion and repression. MAXQDA coding relationships reveal that the rejection of asylum applications, restrictions on movement and return policies are frequently presented on security grounds. Thus, repressive measures are framed as 'necessary' and 'inevitable' precautions, beyond the scope of ethical and legal debates. Consequently, the MAXQDA-supported analysis demonstrates that the 'security/threat' code forms a discursive centre in the EU's migration and asylum policies and produces a binding logic of power that holds all other disciplinary mechanisms together.

6) Shutting Code. Relevant reports analysed: *Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN)*, 2024; *BVMN*, 2023; *BVMN*, 2022; *Amnesty.org.tr*, 2021. In this context, the 'Shutting' code, which accounts for 6 per cent in Fig. 3.2, indicates that the EU's border management does not merely stop migrants but subjects them to strict spatial isolation. Incidents in which asylum-seekers are removed from minibuses – into which they were "forced to enter" (10, 18) – and detained in police stations and containers are frequently reported. At the Bulgarian border, it was noted that "they were held in a very small room unsuitable for detaining more than 100 people" (11) and statements that "they were held at the police station for approximately four hours, unable to use the toilet or access food and water" (17) prove that confinement is a punitive measure. "They stayed there for a total of 20 days... When they asked for fresh air, the guards told them 'tomorrow', but they were never let out" (6) – these accounts reflect the gravity of prolonged detentions. Isolation facilities are sites of intense violence. The actions of the border police, who "sprayed pepper spray into the container before locking the whole group inside" (5), demonstrate that the facility itself was turned into an instrument of torture. The report by Amnesty International states: "There were beds in the cells, but there were no mattresses on them.

They were just metal frames' (1) and 'We then heard shouting and screaming from the neighbouring cells. They took the people out of their cells one by one until the sounds ceased completely' (1) confirm the horror of the situation. The fact that these closed facilities are monitored by officials "observing the camp from a container... wearing military uniforms" (11) confirms the existence of a militarised network. Indeed, in the relevant reports, sentences containing or evoking terms such as "prison", "container", "cell", "detention" and "closed centres" have been assessed within the framework of the 'detention code' and coded accordingly. The analysis, conducted using the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis programme, reveals that the 'detention' code lies at the heart of administrative and spatial control mechanisms within the EU's migration and asylum policies. The code analysis shows that the 'detention' code is strongly associated, in particular, with the codes for 'oppression', 'discipline/surveillance/control systems' and 'monitoring/tracking'. This indicates that detention is not an exceptional measure, but is applied as a continuous technique of power in migration management. In the descriptive coding process, confinement was coded through spatial arrangements such as detention practices, temporary accommodation facilities, border camps, transit zones and return centres. MAXQDA contextual analyses reveal that, whilst these spaces are often presented discursively as compulsory, administrative and temporary solutions, in practice they produce regimes of confinement that severely restrict the freedom of movement of asylum seekers and migrants. The code analysis also shows that the 'enclosure' code is closely linked to the discourse of security and threat. Practices of detention and enclosure are legitimised on the grounds of combating irregular migration, border security and public order. Furthermore, the code analysis demonstrates that the 'enclosure' code establishes structural links with codes of identity and exclusion. Detention practices physically separate asylum seekers and migrants from the social sphere; at the same time, they position them as 'temporary' and 'exceptional' subjects. This situation results in migrants being subjected to a long-term regime of waiting and being kept in a state of legal uncertainty. MAXQDA-supported analysis reveals that the 'enclosure' code constitutes a multi-layered technique of power operating at administrative, discursive and spatial levels within the EU's migration and asylum policies. 7) Norm/Power Laboratory Code. The MAXQDA analysis found no meaningful data relating to the Norm/Power Laboratory code in the EU reports. The main reason for this is that the reports examined focus not on how policies are formulated, but on direct implementations on the ground and human rights violations. In other words, as these texts document practices of violence, repression and exclusion on the ground rather than the norms produced by those in power at their desks, this code did not find a counterpart in the dataset in question.

4 Conclusions, discussion and recommendations

This article has subjected the role of surveillance in the European Union's migration and asylum policies to a methodological analysis using the relevant texts (reports/news articles) and the MAXQDA qualitative data analysis programme. The analysis, based on data obtained from news content and civil society reports, demonstrates that the EU's management of migration is structured not merely as a 'humanitarian crisis' or a 'political and legal' issue, but also as a surveillance-based sphere of governance. It also demonstrates that the EU's migration and asylum policies are structured, at the

discursive level, primarily around the axes of security, identity/exclusion and oppression. Indeed, the code ratios and relationships between codes identified in the MAXQDA analyses show that the 'security/threat' code, in particular, is closely linked to the codes for 'oppression', 'identity/exclusion' and 'closure'. Consequently, this situation reveals that, in EU policies, the phenomenon of migration is not viewed as a purely legal and humanitarian issue, but is framed primarily as a threat that must be controlled, restricted and managed. Furthermore, this situation is significantly at odds with the EU's self-perceived identity as a normative actor on the international stage. Furthermore, the article's other findings show that the EU suspends its foreign policy discourse—shaped around the rule of law, human rights and universal norms—when it comes to border and migration management. Indeed, the integration of the security/threat code with codes of oppression and identity/exclusion indicates that norms are applied not universally, but in a selective and conditional manner. In this context, the article demonstrates that the EU's normative power erodes at the discursive level, particularly during times of crisis, and is relegated to the background in the face of security-oriented rationality. Here, refugees and migrants are represented not as individuals possessing rights, but as biopolitical risks threatening the continuity of the border regime. Indeed, this situation highlights the disconnect between administrative practices and normative discourse. In addition to all this, the findings of this article contribute to the discipline of international relations in three ways. Firstly, by deepening the literature on securitisation through discourse analysis, this article demonstrates that security is constructed not only through political decisions but also through repeated discursive practices. Consequently, security emerges not so much as an objective state but as a discursive field produced and legitimised by certain actors. Secondly, the article makes a critical contribution to debates on normative power, arguing that normative claims must be tested against empirical practices. Particularly in the case of the EU, normativity emerges not as a consistent and fixed foreign policy identity, but as a fluid position negotiated through discourses of interest and security. Thirdly, the article proposes an interpretation to the critical international relations literature that shifts the focus away from border management as a technical policy domain and instead treats it as a laboratory of power, control, discipline and surveillance. Indeed, this perspective demonstrates that borders are constructed not only geographically but also administratively and discursively. Furthermore, this article makes three original contributions to the existing literature. The first is to make visible the tension between counter-discourses and the dominant security discourse by analysing civil society reports and media discourse within the same analytical framework. Secondly, by utilising MAXQDA coding relationships and analysis to concretise the structural links between the phenomena of oppression, shutting, security, surveillance and discipline, it supports abstract discussions of securitisation with empirical findings. Thirdly, it bridges the gap between the literature on international relations and Foucauldian analyses of power, demonstrating that migration policies are not merely policy outcomes but are also practices of power that delineate normative boundaries and produce subjects. In addition to these contributions, this article is also directly linked to the *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* established by the United Nations. Indeed, the findings of the research reveal that the security-centred and exclusionary surveillance policies adopted by the EU in border and migration management are in structural tension with the objectives of equal access and inclusivity envisaged under SDG 10 (reducing inequalities), as well as with the principles of

accountability, justice and governance based on human rights emphasised in the context of SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions). In this regard, the research demonstrates that global sustainability goals are closely linked not only to development policies but also to the practices of surveillance and border regimes.

In addition to all this information, this article proposes several new lines of research for future studies. Firstly, a similar discourse analysis could be expanded to cover different time periods, enabling a comparative examination of discursive breaks and continuities in EU migration policies. Secondly, interviews with policymakers or analyses of internal institutional documents could be used to investigate how discursive outputs are reflected at the practical level or in implementation. Finally, by comparing the European Union's border policies and practices with other regional migration regimes, the article could examine how the link between securitisation and normativity varies on a global scale. Overall, this article presents a critical perspective that treats borders not merely as geographical lines, but as a common ground for processes of discourse, norm-making and power production. This perspective serves as a call for normative claims in migration studies to be evaluated critically and in conjunction with empirical practices.

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Author Contributions

F.K. conceived the study, designed the research framework, conducted the data collection and qualitative analysis using MAXQDA, and wrote the initial draft of the manuscript. E.Z. contributed to the conceptual framework, literature review, and interpretation of the findings. M.C. contributed to the methodological development, critically reviewed the analysis, and assisted in revising the manuscript. R.İ. supervised the research process, contributed to the interpretation of the results, critically revised the manuscript for important intellectual content, finalized the manuscript for submission, and served as the corresponding author. All authors reviewed, edited, and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Ethics, Consent to Participate, and Consent to Publish

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Data Availability

All data generated or analysed during this study are included in this published article [and its supplementary information files]

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Figures

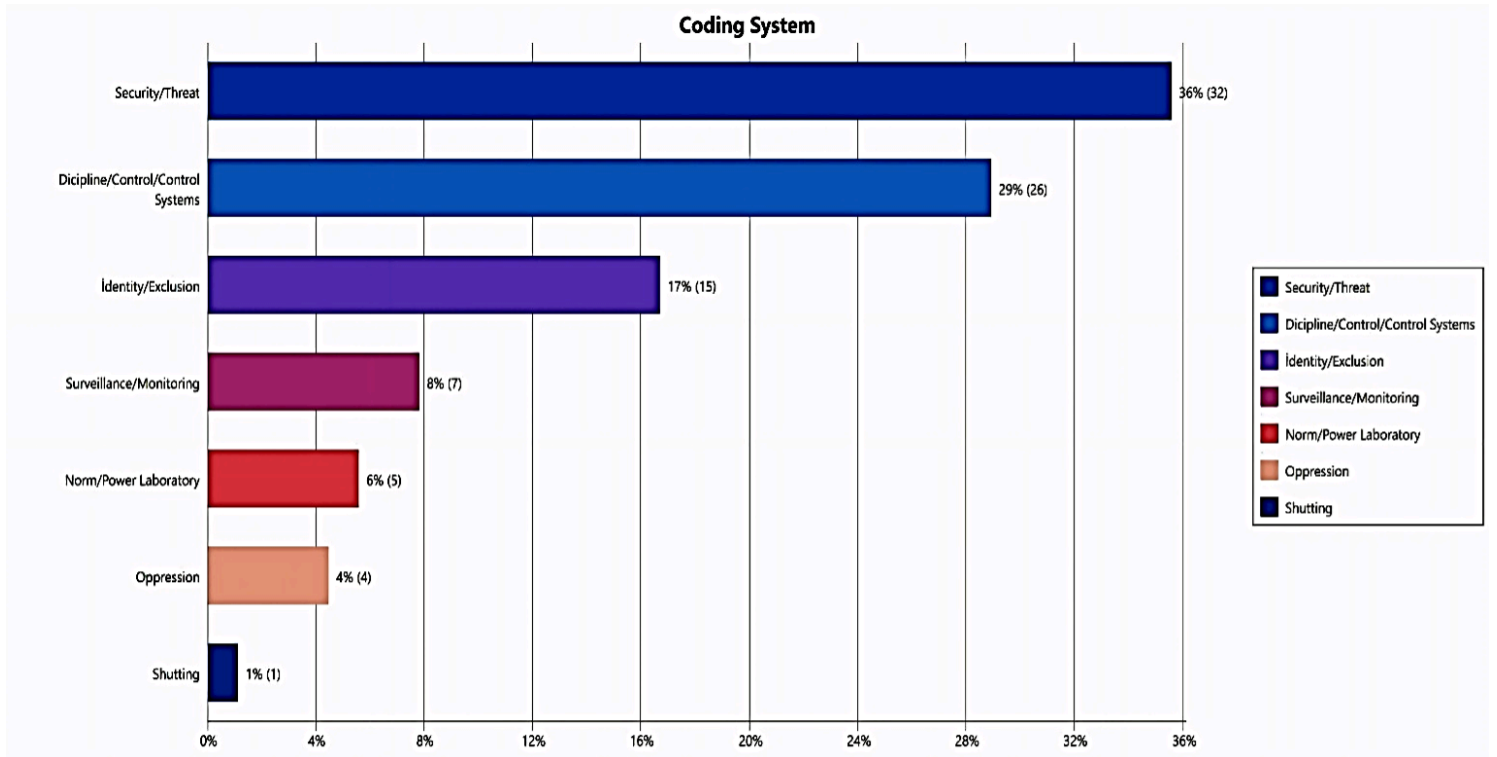


Figure 1

Figure 3.1 Code chart of news texts on the EU's migration and asylum policy

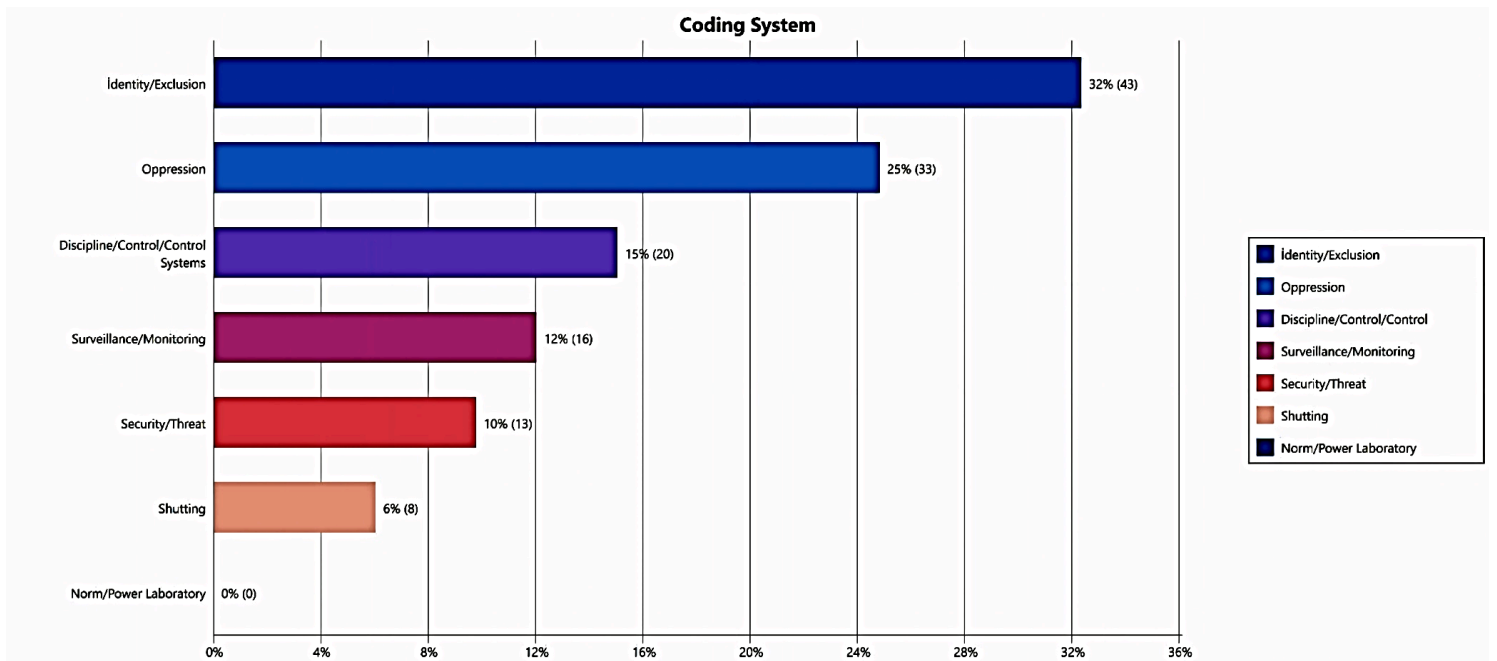


Figure 2

Figure 3.2 Code chart for reports on the EU's migration and asylum policy