

Abstract

This doctoral thesis examines the issue of crisis governance of the European Union in the context of migration developments after 2015. The author investigates how relevant EU institutions (European Commission, Council of the EU, and European Council) construct exceptionality within the common asylum and migration policy and what might be its impacts on the functionality of this policy. Theoretically, the research is based on the concept of "state of exception" originally introduced in the works of Carl Schmitt and Giorgio Agamben.

The main objective of the thesis is to analyze and interpret the extraordinary migration measures from 2015 to 2018, which were proposed and implemented by the EU political actors to address the migration situation. The institutional level is further broadened and contextualized by including three EU Member State governments – Hungary, Austria, and Germany – and their involvement in the interactive shaping of emergency policies. The author studies how the exception is constructed in the EU official discourse, the relationship between exception and normality, and the exercise of power to create a state of exception at supranational/intergovernmental level of the EU as an international organization.

The thesis approaches the topic using critical discourse analysis. It focuses on legal acts and accompanying press releases of EU institutions (and the three EU Member States) published in relation to the extraordinary measures. In addition, the analysis draws from 21 interviews with members of EU security apparatus (mostly members of the Czech Police and the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic), who were deployed at the Union's external borders between 2015 and 2018. The role of the interviews is to illustrate how these exceptional measures were exercised locally and to approach their material dimension.

The analysis shows that the extraordinary elements that were originally proposed as temporary solutions become sedimented through a multidirectional process within the EU migration legal framework. This process is driven both by EU institutions (e.g. their efforts to normalize emergency redistribution mechanisms of asylum seekers) as well as its Member States (extending exceptional internal border controls within the Schengen area). Furthermore, the research also points out the increased pressure for reorientation of the EU migration policy in the logic of "preemptive crisis" or "preemptive crisis governance". It seeks to strengthen the immediate capabilities of the EU to get the "next crisis" under control as quickly as possible while disciplining how individual actors implement the EU collective rules. Finally, the thesis illustrates some real-world shortcomings of the crisis measures and problematic outcomes of the extraordinary actions of the EU Member States. On a theoretical level, the research

questions the usual dichotomic perception of exception and normality and stresses their conceptual blurring and blending.