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THE DISCURSIVE TOPICALISATION OF TRUST, ETHICS AND IDEOLOGY IN EUROPEAN SECURITY ISSUES

CHIARA PROSPERI PORTA
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA "LA SAPIENZA"

Abstract – This chapter investigates the discourse of the EU law-enforcement agency, Europol, and the ways in which trust, ethics and ideology are engaged in communication in order to achieve institutional legitimation through the discursive construction of 'danger' and 'emergencies'. The analysis considers a corpus of annual reports published over the last ten years (2008-2018). The relationship between the production of security discourse, institutional responsibility and credibility will show how trust discourse can be either rooted in insecurity or safety and deeply rely on the categories of ethics and ideology, according to the specific circumstances and communicative needs of the organisation. Quantitative and qualitative findings will reveal how lexical and phraseological key features, as well as a dichotomy created through the use of polarisation strategies, can shape contrasting *ingroup* or *outgroup* identities/roles, alternatively feeding credibility or discredit, on the issue of safeguarding European security. This linguistic interplay will discursively extricate the harmful potential of criminal forces' ideological agenda, legitimise repressive control measures as ethically acceptable, as well as empower Europol's trustworthy image and propagandise its beneficial role in the fight against crime and terrorism.

Keywords: trust; ethics; ideology; law-enforcement discourse; polarisation strategies; legitimation strategies.

1. Introduction

This chapter explores the relationship between discursive practices in the context of European societal security and the categories of trust, ideology and ethics. The study is based on a corpus of annual reports published from 2008 to 2018 by the EU law enforcement agency Europol, whose decisions and modalities of action not only form the basis of European security discourse, but also involve issues of supra-national social control, while shaping a 'security identity' (Waever 1995). In this way, security is discursively interconnected with the legitimation of identity, credibility and trust among the national authorities (Candlin, Crichton 2013).

The interference of organized crime and terrorism in the EU context has contributed to social insecurity and represents the most serious threat to the wellbeing of Member States, where cooperation and coordination have not effectively met a common response, in terms of the perception of danger and institutional analysis of the problem (Baker-Beall 2014, 2016). Hence, in the conceptualisation of European security, intelligence measures and operations may background the ideal of ethical behaviour and be discursively legitimised through the voice of institutional expertise and reliability, with a view to promoting institutional trustworthiness among European citizens in the 'war on terror' (Jarvis 2009), as well as in exhibiting a certain organisational conduct to pre-empt the escalation of specific threats.

As a matter of fact, the role of trust and credibility is embedded in the formation and maintenance of relationships among law-enforcement institutions, Member States and people, as well as in the ethical cooperation and exchange of investigative practices in the fight against crime and terrorism. Since trust not only involves institutional responsibility, but also moral credibility and recognition, it can be mediated through strategic communication in the production of security discourse and sourced by the appeal to a shared set of values either rooted in insecurity or in safety; similarly, trust can be variously fed or depressed by the authorship's discursive representation of emergencies and the audience's acceptance of control measures.

Security discourse also engages a two-fold dimension of 'security identity', which comprises the supranational *self* representation of the law-enforcement agency and the description of *other* national intelligence partners when engaged in combating criminal organisations. The ideological sense of 'togetherness' and cooperative behaviour between supranational and national entities necessarily include the ways in which these representations of the *self* and the *other* may strategically emerge or not in the discursive release of documents about security. For this reason, the supranational law-enforcement agency may project itself within the community by disclosing its proactive role in accomplishing its security mission or by putting on a good face in the case of failure. It may also shift blame onto other intelligence partners for having lacked an adequate sense of cooperation.

For this reason, the aim of the study is to investigate how, during the dissemination process, law-enforcement communication realises trust, ethics and ideology in security reports and the strategies deployed at the institutional level in shaping the discourse of security, in order to serve a trustworthy/positive or negative representation of roles/identities.

2. Theoretical framework: trust, ethics and ideology in security issues

It is well-known that the socio-political environment, ethical 'frames' and ideologies affect the dynamics of institutional knowledge and the production of discourse (Kress 2010, p. 19), and in so doing, regulate the standards of conduct or organisational practices (Downe *et al.* 2016, p. 898). In setting operational guidelines and issuing policies at the communicative level within the institutional agency or body, specific conduct can be endorsed or sanctioned and the dimension of trust also be engaged in order to shape people's views of other people/groups, make cohesion, and build cooperative relations (Gambetta 1988; Good 1988). This is a relevant feature which particularly affects the delivery of texts about ideologically and ethically relevant issues because of their stringent implications in specific sectors, such as public security. Good (1988, p. 31) explains how

> In the analysis of trust, we are inevitably drawn to the complex two-way interrelationships between it, in the economic and political fabric of society, and the individuals who constitute that society. On the one hand we may be concerned with its role in the creation of that fabric and its psychological impact on the individual, and on the other we may be concerned with how that fabric and the properties of those individuals can serve to maintain trust and any associated cooperative behaviours.

Especially in the security environment, the role that trust plays on individuals and institutional bodies impacts on their behaviours and actions, thus involving

> […] a modality of human action: a more or less consciously chosen policy for handling the freedom of other human agents or agencies. As a passion, a sentiment, it can be evanescent or durable. But as a modality of action it is essentially concerned with coping with uncertainty over time. (Dunn 1988, p. 73)

Such binary dynamics operated by trust between the behaviour of agents and the role of agencies have attracted scholars' attention (Candlin, Crichton 2013; Downe *et al.* 2016; Gambetta 1988; Good 1988; Hood 2011; Wenger 1998) both in terms of ontological conceptualisation and in the exploration of the communicative strategies engaged to build a trustworthy relationship between organizations and individuals. Good (1988, p. 33) considers the notion of trust as based on an individual/group's set of beliefs as to someone else's action or conduct in a potential future situation, while Candlin and Crichton (2013, p. 2) observe that "trust is always associated with expectations about the behaviour of others that may be more or less

founded", and at the same time has an impact on knowledge production. Candlin and Crichton (2013, pp. 9-13) also highlight trust's discursive reliance on intention and choice, its negotiation through conscious strategic communication and the involvement of role, responsibility and accountability associated with any type of identity; they argue that trust encompasses credibility and recognition based on confidence, as well as connotes social/institutional influence, either enabling or inhibiting authority.

Along with trust, ethics has become an integral component in the transfer of knowledge (Garzone, Sarangi 2007), because it delineates questions of correct conduct, particularly in the public sphere, and facilitates the empowerment of ideology in the subsequent implementation of institutional policies (van Dijk 2000). In fact, ethics exerts influence on groups/individuals in issuing guidance about the appropriate conduct to be undertaken, through the sanctioning of negative role models or the endorsement of exemplary behaviour (Joyce 2014). Ethics may also correspond to group-established standards and be imposed on its members as a means of regulating and setting limits on social behaviours (especially those conducts which represent violations or offences against public security), and as such it may be connected to ideology when it positively/negatively enhances

> socially shared beliefs that are associated with the characteristic properties of a group, such as their identity, their position in society, their interests and aims, their relations to other groups, their reproduction, and their natural environment. (van Dijk 2000, p. 12)

Taken together, ethics and ideology provide the context and medium through which people create, maintain and change power and social relations, thus legitimising group conventions and actions in a specific situation or particular domain of action. Ideology in particular, considered as a system of ideas and ideals socially shaping discourses and practices, may give its contribution to organise attitudes, opinions and even prejudices among the members of a group about the negative properties or conduct of others (van Dijk 2000, pp. 14-15), thus generating conflict or struggle.

Several studies have also demonstrated how ethics and ideology can be pivotal in the framing of institutional or professional identity (Loseke 2007; Simon 2004; Spencer Oatey 2007) and the achievement of discursive reliability. Consequently, discourses of trust and the communicative strategies (Hansson 2015, p. 299) used to address public concern about contemporary societal issues may enhance the effectiveness of institutional power in action, and be representative features of ethical/ideological security discourse in specific contexts such as the EU, because

> when people place their trust in systems, they implicitly place trust in the experts associated with those systems, and as a consequence this expert status, articulated in the form of specialist knowledge and expertise, becomes a source of power for the system and for some of the actors that inhabit it. However, this expertise status, and the associated invoking of trust in the system as a whole, may be jeopardised if actors and systems fail to deliver expected outcomes. (Candlin, Crichton 2013, p. 3)

In this way, at the same time that knowledge is disseminated, trust-bearing discourse can help to construct, constrain or jeopardise the idea of an ethical identity, as well as enable community identification, and ideology can be used at the institutional level to emphasise or lessen meanings of *self*-presentation or *other*-presentation (Hansson 2015, 2017; Hood 2011; Prosperi Porta 2018, 2019; van Dijk 2000, 2006; Weaver 1995), when there is the need to prevent the loss of trust, to ethically/ideologically empower legitimacy and facilitate cooperation among public authorities.

To this end, ideology can be functional to the polarisation of group behaviours in positive and negative ways (van Dijk 2000, p. 37) when the authorship aims at endorsing institutional action as inescapable, at making acceptable group dominance and at feeding trust and confidence, especially in those "situations in which significant groups within a society feel threatened […] and try to defend themselves" (Waever 1995, p. 60), such as in matters of European societal security, where for ideological reasons, discourse

> […] constructs an issue as an 'existential' threat. By labelling something as a 'security' issue gives it a certain sense of importance and urgency that legitimises the use of extraordinary measures beyond the norms and practices of everyday politics. (Baker-Beall 2016, p. 192)

Hence, policies may be successfully conveyed appealing to a strong sense of insecurity and uncertainty, by a negative representation of 'otherness' (negative group polarisation) considered as a threat to security or by positive institutional self-representation (positive group polarisation) that normalises a repressive response to crime and consolidates institutional image and public recognition. The speech act of labelling something as 'security' may lead "to specific ways of addressing it: threat, defence, and […] solutions" (Waever 1995, p. 58), at times even encouraging the idea that some threats exceed any possible control (Baker-Beall 2014, 2016; Jarvis 2009). Thus, the connection between precautionary security, exceptional measures and ideological institutional engagement enables the identification of the agency with the promises of implementing effective solutions for the common good of people, and at the same time places trust in the 'securitisation' of a problem. The institution may deliberately create a constant feeling of threat to feed

confidence, as well as emphasise commitment in a very complex system of power-relationships, with a view to ensuring Member States' compliance (Jocak, Kochenov 2017). The authorship can recur to other discursive tools such as modalities legitimising authority, value judgments and anticipative strategies of defence in case of any possible blame endangering the law-enforcement agency's construction of a reliable 'security identity' (Waever 1995, p. 65).

In using conscious defensive practices, the authorship may endorse public policies appealing to credibility. Trustworthiness can be ideally validated by institutional recognition and driven by ideology.

Therefore, the national and supranational relations among law-enforcement intelligence and its partners involve different dynamics in articulating trust discourse, in terms of how it is sourced, projected and may be perceived. The following Sections will explore Europol's shaping of trust discourse and its connections with ethics and ideology in the realisation of the EU agency's leadership, as well as in the projection of an accountable institutional identity and in the codification of appropriate response or behaviour to danger.

3. Corpus and Methodology

The corpus is made up of Annual Reports, published from 2008 to 2018 by Europol, whose first issue follows the creation of the European Police office body and the commencement of the agency's activities in the field of defence and security. The corpus amounts to 189,881 tokens and 29,809 types.

Europol's reports are documents issued by highly-trained experts and aim at providing strategic analysis directed to warding off serious and organised crime and terrorism in Europe; they also promote the agency's mission of facilitating cooperation and effectively implementing control measures among Member States' law-enforcement authorities. In the EU, the report genre can be considered as an institutionalised form of communication which guides the social activities of various institutional communities of practice (Prosperi Porta 2018, p. 17).

In the European context of security, the presentation of discourse is targeted either at operators in the field or the lay public; the argumentation of facts and figures accounts for the agency's achievements, the latest intelligence methodologies and techniques used in crime assessment. Documents are released on an annual basis and are available to the public on Europol's website (Prosperi Porta 2018, 2019).

The quantitative analysis relies on current corpus-assisted discourse studies (Baker 2006; Bondi, Scott 2010; Hunston 2002; Partington 2004, 2010; Rayson 2008; Sinclair 1991, 1996, 2003) and considers the lexical

salience of words that topicalise institutional trust, ethics and ideology in Europol's group argumentation, so as to shed light on how discourse can be ideologically oriented and engage the idea of a trustworthy supranational body. Analogously, the discursive topicalisation of trust could be morally aimed at favouring cooperation among law-enforcement partners and be sublimated into commitment to security in order to persuade the target audience. To this end, quantitative data related to argumentation about security issues will be obtained with the support of the software Concapp5 (Grieves 2005).

The qualitative analysis instead, aims at exploring the discursive strategies empowering ideology (polarized group representation, evaluation, rhetorical devices) and legitimation techniques (defence strategies, modalities legitimising authority, securitisation discourse), developed by Europol, with the aim of building, maintaining or restoring trust in the circumstances of blame or legitimising their institutional role and actions as 'ethical', with a view to making them acceptable to recipients.

4. Crime strategic analysis in Europol's reports

Europol is a EU agency, active in the fight against the different forms of contemporary crime, including among its major issues a special focus on terrorism.

Europol's relationship with Member States' partners has achieved an increased importance since 2009, becoming progressively prominent in 2013, and re-defined in the period 2014-18, so as to cover under the same umbrella many relevant EU institutions, agencies and their strategic activities.

Since 2008, Europol has published its Annual Reports in order to provide law-enforcement partners, and the public, with an overview of the agency's different activities in the field of EU-wide criminal intelligence knowledge. The dissemination of strategic counter-crime analysis led to the exchange of data through a consolidated type of document, so as to have rapid feedback and supra-nationally guide operations and implement policies in the law-enforcement community. It also informs the wider readership about the agency's activities and achievements.

The oldest documents (2008-2010) are the most extensive, while the latest editions (2011-2018) present a significantly simplified structure and show a progressive reduction in their length, foregrounding particular issues, such as terrorism and cybercrime. Quite unexpectedly, following Europol's recent establishment as the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation in 2017, the 2018 report was further abbreviated to *Europol in brief*, which consists of a short summary of the former report genre. This change may be linked to a careful choice of standardising the key-areas of

knowledge in the focus of institutional action and communication (in recent years, specific themes such as terrorism have been given larger prominence by the agency in the form of single monographic publications, probably in order to appeal more to the interests of the intended readership). It may also be revealing of other factors that are worth considering. In fact, it may indicate new policy changes and a possible variation in the selection of information to be shared, following the appointment of a new director in 2018, or a progressive loss of popularity of texts/topics among the recipients. Perhaps, it may also signal a lessened degree of shared 'security' knowledge that could be effectively exchanged for best practice. It may unveil an institutional feeling of inadequacy in dealing with increasing security threats, as well.

5. Quantitative findings

On the basis of the quantitative investigation, it can be said that some nouns, verbs and modifiers build Europol's ideology and encompass ethics on a textual level, when propagandising a trustworthy and accountable institutional identity. Data have been collected according to their statistical degree of salience, as indicated in the following tables.

5.1. Trust-building nouns

As far as nouns are concerned, statistics have proved how some specific trust-building nouns frequently mark discourse, as displayed in Table 1 below.

Noun (2008-2018)	Raw frequencies	Relative frequency per 100 tokens
support	674	0.3478
cooperation	512	0.2642
terrorism	320	0.1651
security	235	0.0697
protection	166	0.0857
expertise	148	0.0764
coordination	139	0.0717
capabilities	101	0.0521
fight	79	0.0408
surveillance	46	0.0237
trust	14	0.0072

Table 1
Trust-building nouns.

The examination of nouns has revealed how Europol's *support* (674 instances, 0.3478%) to intelligence partners, *cooperation* (512 instances, 0.2642%) among Member States and the *fight* (79 instances, 0.0408%) for societal *security* (231 instances, 0.1192%) register a relevant salience in the corpus, being in clear contrast with the very low occurrence of other nouns which could have been used more frequently to overtly build a trustworthy institutional 'security identity', as in the case of *trust* (14 instances, 0.0072%) and *surveillance* (46 instances, 0.0237%). However, it is interesting to note that, from an in-depth reading of the reports and an examination of frequencies on an annual basis, the occurrence of *surveillance* drastically dropped from 2015 onwards, following the Islamic State outbreak of simultaneous terrorist attacks. The quantitative reduction of *surveillance* could reflect, discursively, the negative impact of possible intelligence failures and the role played by institutional ideology in linguistically toning down or masquerading security errors. It may also signal a feasible sense of institutional inadequacy when adopting ineffective counter-measures against terrorism's unpredictability, and to some extent, may be explained as a sign of trust decline, as indicated by a falling trend registered by *trust*, gradually decreasing from 2013 to 2015 and completely disappearing in 2016-2018 (coinciding with the new rise of terrorist attacks since 2015).

Since security relies on real sources of danger, statistical frequencies indicate the increased necessity for Europol to propagandise the notion of the *fight* (79 instances, 0.0408%) and *protection* (166 instances, 0.0857%), against the proliferation of *terrorism* (320 instances, 0.165%), among Member States, as well as the agency's need to self-project as a leader in the *coordination* (139 instances, 0.0717%) of synergy with intelligence partners, and in the promotion of its analytical or operational *capabilities* (101 instances, 0.0521%).

5.2. Verbs constructing 'security identity' and 'war on terror' discourse

In addition to nouns, some verbs appealing to the agency's ethics and ideology in the accomplishment of law-enforcement duties, have been retrieved in the corpus. Past tenses are frequently used in the narrative, on the institutional side, to describe results and achievements against criminal hubs and constitute typical usage of 'war on terror' discourse (Baker-Beall 2014). The use of past forms helps Europol to successfully disseminate knowledge about its strategic activities, accomplished missions and contribute to shape public confidence. When some of these verbs are used in the present tense or infinitive form they can mark institutional continuity in the security commitment and feed positive expectations about institutional behaviour, which is frequently portrayed as resorting to the power of intelligence

capabilities. A short list of the most salient infinitives/present and past forms is shown in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Infinitive/present (2008-2018)	Raw frequencies	Relative frequency per 100 tokens
secure	143	0.073
arrest	71	0.036
combat	43	0.022
check	37	0.019
coordinate	34	0.017
disrupt	34	0.017
attack	28	0.014
fight	28	0.014
detect	21	0.010
dismantle	19	0.009

Table 2
Present/ Infinitive forms constructing 'security identity' and 'war on terror' discourse.

Past/Past Participle (2008-2018)	Raw frequencies	Relative frequency per 100 tokens
seized	254	0.131
arrested	180	0.092
identified	155	0.080
coordinated	108	0.055
dismantled	76	0.039
detected	24	0.012
investigated	17	0.008
checked	16	0.0083
intercepted	15	0.0077
disrupted	14	0.0072

Table 3
Past/ Past Participle forms constructing 'security identity' and 'war on terror' discourse.

Linguistic evidence shows how trust, ethics and ideology permeate discourse when a word such as *terrorism* collocates with the verbs related to the notion of battle (*disrupt, combat, fight, attack, dismantle*) and securitisation (*secure, detect, arrest*), therefore emphasising the societal vulnerability deriving from any absence of control, implicitly re-stating Europol's core values and also the need to adopt severe repressive measures. As a result, most of the verbs presented in Tables 2 and 3 involve the idea of criminal destruction and detection so as to feature 'war on terror' discourse and de-legitimise terrorist ideological agenda, while empowering the behaviour of intelligence.

5.3. Evaluative modifiers constructing 'security identity'

Along with nouns and verbs, the use of lexis related to the leading role of Europol in the field of crime, of the agency's operational timing and high-expertise intelligence, often tracks the occurrence of evaluative modifiers (adjectives/adverbs) to positively represent institutional identity in the texts, as well as to project a trustworthy image of vigilance and efficient behaviour aimed at supporting institutional ideology. For this reason, the description of intelligence activities often results in the combination of modifiers with most nouns presented in Table 1, thus emphasising success and justifying the implementation of intense security measures for the common good of people. Some of these modifiers (adjectives) are illustrated in Table 4 below.

Evaluative modifier- adj. (2008-2018)	**Raw frequencies**	**Relative frequency per 100 tokens**
new	484	0.249
strategic	204	0.146
significant	126	0.065
important	120	0.061
high	94	0.048
active	92	0.047
successful	83	0.042
relevant	76	0.039
effective	66	0.034
unique	60	0.031
early	47	0.024
specialised	46	0.023
valuable	34	0.017
timely	27	0.013
efficient	24	0.012
necessary	16	0.008
strong	15	0.007
intensive	11	0.005

Table 4
Evaluative modifiers constructing 'security identity'.

The use of evaluative modifiers ideally contributes to building a reliable institutional identity for Europol, as well as enhancing its image of 'securitisation' and protection, thus feeding institutional consolidation and trust. However, apart from those modifiers registering the highest positions (*new, significant, strategic*), which highlight intelligence innovation, the agency also foregrounds its paramount role in the European law-enforcement environment in terms of operative timeliness, efficiency (*timely, efficient, unique*), as well as credits itself with expertise (*specialised, valuable*) against

the different forms of criminality, with a view to positively affecting public trust and recognition. Quantitative findings also disclose the need to convey the existence of a 'security identity' which constantly and strenuously stays focused on the EU societal threats. As a matter of fact, the notion of fighting often interconnects with the reference to the intelligence voice of experience, by reason of ideologically supporting the problematisation of danger; similarly, the discursive act of managing threats as urgent issues feeds confidence in Europol's role as a holistic security actor, whose strategic measures and capabilities are legitimised as ethically credible.

6. Qualitative findings

The qualitative investigation has aimed at identifying the discursive strategies deployed by Europol to shape security through the elicitation of institutional trust, ethics and ideology. The exploration of quantitative data has confirmed the use of group polarisation strategies in the texts (van Dijk 2000, pp. 34-36) to legitimise practice and expertise, as well as to propagandise Europol's image and its 'security identity' (Waever 1995) in the EU. Strategies (Hansson 2017; Hood 2011) can also be utilised to direct the agency's identity towards public consensus around its policies and positions, build trust, and push aside possible sources of blame.

The rising emergence of new threats, particularly those regarding the implications of terrorism and people smuggling, has frequently conceptualised Europol as a trustworthy and efficient security actor, stressing the need to guide intelligence partners through cooperation and to adjust divergent or disharmonised conducts within the law-enforcement community. This need has obviously influenced the terms in which the agency has been projected in the reports to make its role acceptable to the readership when extraordinary repressive measures must be implemented. Therefore, the discursive representation of a proactive identity may be presented as consistently committed to successful operations as well as to European security, or emerge as skilfully driving the decisions of national authorities in the name of its authoritative experience and expertise. Through the agency appeal to operational uniformity, cooperation and coordination in the disruption of terrorism and other illicit activities, institutional ideology, role and values can be enforced as credible because they correspond to the specific urgency of some issues that are exhibited as unavoidable in terms of security behaviour. This feature is shown in examples (1) to (5).

(1) From its founding roots in the early 1990s as the Europol Drugs Unit, the organisation has grown beyond all recognition and developed into an agency of the European Union (EU). Today Europol is […] occupying a central place in

> the field of law enforcement cooperation in Europe. It has unique crime-fighting capabilities tailored to combat serious international crime and terrorism. European law enforcement agencies rely on Europol's 24/7 operational service centre. Europol employs some of the best criminal analysts in Europe, produces high-quality strategic and operational analysis and coordinates […] cross-border investigations each year. (EUROPOL 2008, p. 4)

(2) Strengthened by a reform to its mandate and capabilities in 2010, Europol is pioneering a new response to these dangers. Europol acquired a new dynamic on 1 January 2010 when it became a fully-fledged European Union agency […]. This has meant the implementation of a new strategy and new legal status with enhanced powers. As a result, Europol has become more open and accountable and its new legal framework will spell quicker […] cooperation between partners, which is especially important for police work. (EUROPOL 2009, p. 4)

(3) Europol has gained an improved position on the EU stage, partly thanks to the Lisbon Treaty, its new legal status, […] and to the agency's own new strategy and improved capabilities. All of these developments make Europol a unique cooperation partner for EU law enforcement agencies and an important contributor to the EU decision-making process. (EUROPOL 2010, p. 60)

(4) Europol provides expertise on the spot but also develops platforms for expert cooperation in a broad spectrum of law enforcement specialisations. Europol aims to be a pioneer in developing best practice as well as pooling European law enforcement expertise to support national investigations. (EUROPOL 2012, p. 20)

(5) Europol has been constantly improving its capabilities to ensure that its services are continuously available, providing round-the-clock support for its law enforcement partners. (EUROPOL 2016-17, p.64)

In example 1 the narrative used is to construct Europol's trusted identity (*from its founding roots*) according to developing stages which mark key dates in institutional image consolidation and recognition (*has grown* […] *and developed into an agency* […] *occupying a central place in* […] *cooperation*). The leading role in security issues and its operational empowerment is expressed by evaluative patterns (*unique capabilities*, *best criminal analysts*, *high-quality strategic and operational analysis*) which convey positive *self*-representation, while featuring group polarisation (van Dijk 2000, p. 18) between Europol's *ingroup* intelligence partners and *outgroup* criminal members. Institutional values emerge in the 'war' attitude which clearly embodies group knowledge and ideology as applied to the security domain. It is worthy of note how intelligence powers are repeatedly and deliberately designated as *capabilities* (namely armament and people) in all the reports, thus evidencing the fact that in the mind of the institution a proper war has to be fought.

The mention of *capabilities* and the idea of a strongly empowered identity having great potentials are also present in example 2, where trust is built through a sense of supra-national commitment (*strengthened to its mandate*), effectiveness and promptness (*will spell quicker cooperation*), as well as responsibility (*accountable*) to invest in. The evaluative modifier *new* which runs many times through the passage, features the agency in terms of innovation both at the operational and constitutive level (*new response*, *new dynamic*, *new strategy*, *new legal status*, *new legal framework*). Similarly, the notion of laying the groundwork (*pioneering*) for intense intelligence measures against *dangers* expresses the soundness of Europol's indefatigable mission and its image is projected as a great addition to the European group of institutions.

In example 3 the value of cooperation is associated with the representation of a leading institutional role (*an improved position on the EU stage*) which serves a trust-feeding function in the audience. Not only are the intelligence's ground-breaking plan of action (*own new strategy*) and use of refined resources (*improved capabilities*) central to law-enforcement achievements, but it is also the agency's special organization (*unique cooperation partner*), as well as its authoritative conduct (*important contributor*) which make synergic operations (*decision-making process*) possible for the sake of EU security.

A comparable avant-garde approach (*aims to be a pioneer*) in investigations that is combined with immediacy of action (*on the spot*) is also shown in example 4, where cooperation and shared knowledge (*pooling law enforcement expertise*) efficaciously blend with the image of a capillary network and remarkable expertise, in view of supra-nationally shouldering the security burden to sustain national authorities.

In a like manner, example 5 displays how the construction of a reliable 'security identity' may also involve the institutional need for publicising permanent assistance (*constantly improving its capabilities to ensure that its services are continuously available*) and uninterrupted dedication (*round-the-clock support for its law enforcement partners*), thus projecting a law-enforcement image in the act of being caring, omnipresent and happy to oblige.

In the constant attempt to realise a shared security, *ingroup* 'security identity' can be given special value and coupled with the ideological emphasis on institutional desire for a concrete working interaction between Europol and intelligence alliances, as shown in the following examples, 6 to 9.

(6) It was a unique experience to see representatives from the Member States and other partners sitting together with Europol colleagues […] providing real time support to officers in the field, not only in the EU, but much wider. All of us, working day and night, with the simple aim of fighting serious and organised crime together. (EUROPOL 2014, p. 7)

(7) Europol is about a mind-set: a wish to effectively cooperate against terrorism and serious and organised crime and a wish to stand united against the multiple and increasingly complex threats to our internal security. (EUROPOL 2015, p. 46)

(8) Being in the centre of EU security architecture, Europol is constantly upgrading its processes and capabilities to provide effective and timely reactions to evolving security threats. […] Europol had to react promptly to the new security challenges and focus its resources on the pressing operational needs. (EUROPOL 2015, p. 48)

(9) Europol experts worked side-by-side with national authorities at the EU's external borders to strengthen security checks on the inward flows of migrants, to disrupt migrant smuggling networks and identify suspected terrorists and criminals. […] Thanks to our presence in the hotspots, we have developed close and trusted working relationships in Italy. We all learned together how to best manage highly sensitive incidents, including responding to dozens of bodies being unloaded from rescue boats. Although professional relationships have always existed, the constant presence of Europol officers was the crucial ingredient that raised cooperation to the next level. (EUROPOL 2016-17, pp. 22-23)

Group identity is emphasised in example 6 through the discursive polarisation of community cooperation. In fact, the harmonious congregation of a united team (*Member States and other partners sitting together with Europol colleagues*) is featured as a special happening (*unique experience*), where all the participants prioritise the defeat of crime groups. Once again, the agency's ideology aims at propagandising a positive image in the challenge of fulfilling its role promptly (*providing real time support*) as a universal security leader (*not only in the EU, but much wider*). As a result, while the law-enforcement range of action is ideally expanded, its objectives are conveniently announced as a basic security issue (*simple aim of fighting* [...] *crime*), and at the same time, *ingroup* cooperation and full-time commitment are inclusively marked (*all of us working day and night* […] *together*).

In example 7 self-intended positive group polarisation from criminal forces strategically emerges to powerfully persuade the public about genuine institutional devotion, as well as in representing the group and its partners as a desirably united organization (*a wish to stand united*) with its beliefs and values (*mind-set*) which are functional to the fight against criminality. The agency's legitimation as an accountable identity is expressed by the authorial inclusive stance enabled by discourse structures such as possessives, engaging the idea of a common institutional concern (*our internal security*). The presence of evaluative modifiers (in this case adverbs) not only generates reasonable expectations and trust (*a wish to effectively cooperate against terrorism*) about the single-minded dedication to law-enforcement action; it also boosts a sense of suspicion and concretely enhances the concept of

danger (*increasingly complex threats*), with the aim of propagandising a shared cognition of national and supra-national joint operations.

Sometimes, as shown in example 8, Europol's *self*-representation may invoke one of the typical metaphors which have an immediate cognitive impact on the readership and have become formulaic patterns in the reports (Prosperi Porta 2019, pp. 145-146), to firmly anchor institutional position in the community of practice. In this case, the authorship displays the *security architecture* metaphor, in order to convey the image of the organisation's structural stability as a shelter that guarantees protection and is the hub of intelligence (*in the centre of EU security architecture*) with which EU law-enforcement partners and activities are connected. The need to legitimate security policies is also linked to the use of some verbs and evaluative modifiers implying that danger may occur unexpectedly (*constantly upgrading its processes* […] *to evolving security threats*) and for this reason, EU security requires an authoritative agency which comes to grips with problems (*to react promptly* […] *and focus its resources on the pressing operational needs*).

Analogously, the topicalization of trust, ethics and ideology is documented in example 9, where Europol strategically reproduces an image of intelligence coalition which adjusts or reduces any possible divergence (*experts worked side-by-side* […]. *We have developed close and trusted working relationship.* […]. *We all learned together how to best manage*), particularly when targeting illegal migration problems such as smuggling and the subsequent rising risk of terrorism. As a matter of fact, it is indisputable that migration has been a very sensitive issue in Mediterranean countries and can represent an evident source of supra-national concern and possible trust deterioration in the case of unsuccessful performance. Therefore, ethics and ideology play a central role when the humanitarian side of institutional behaviour is shown in the act of giving assistance and a shelter to refugees (*responding to dozen of bodies* […] *unloaded from rescue boats*), although constantly keeping the law-enforcement eye on those individuals who may have potentially adhered to terrorist ideals (*identify suspected terrorists*), as well as preventing those illegal migration-related activities from continuing (*disrupt* […] *smuggling*). Once again, *self*-representation reveals the need to underline the expertise pool embodied by Europol in constructing a 'security identity' and is consistent with the concept of a trustworthy leadership (*our presence*), whose expert contribution is considered as dramatically necessary to cooperative relations (*the crucial ingredient* […] *to raise cooperation*). In addition, illegal migration here establishes an ethical discursive link between terrorism as an "emotive act of violence" (Baker-Beall 2014, p. 217) and the problem of asylum policies, the latter for the fact of being transformed into a parallel and insidious danger. Consequently, in the reports this adverse

perception may involve negative group polarisation of the *other* to de-legitimise *outgroup* actions and promote *self* superiority. This is shown in the following examples 10, 11 and 12.

(10) In 2016 terrorists once again demonstrated that the only thing needed to commit an attack is the will of a radicalised individual. Once Islamic State (IS) began to lose territory and the first signs of its defeat appeared, its leaders repeatedly called for IS supporters and followers to bring the war to the heartland of Europe and the US by committing terrorist attacks on the soil of coalition members. On top of that, IS operatives and fighters began [...] to enter Europe using - in some cases - the migration flows […]. Europe is faced with a mix of terrorist threats which cannot be dealt by the EU Member States alone. Europol also maintains a link between its terrorism and organized crime databases which enables swift, continuous cross-matching of information, and the establishment of links between investigations. This way a significant number of individuals were identified who had first been reported for organized crime activities and were later reported as terrorism suspects. […] Trusted teams and networks of experts are equally important in the timely exchange of information. (EUROPOL 2016-17, pp. 28-29)

(11) Conscious of their disjointed appearance, the spin-off media outlets are increasingly aware of the need to appear more united and aim to project the image of an IS franchise. With this in mind, they are careful to produce propaganda that carries the hallmarks of IS and mimic the group's official braggadocio. The need to appear more as a monolithic bloc and less like disparate groups […] is even more crucial in light of a long-standing ideological dispute – between the lesser and more radicals within IS – that is currently raging online. (EUROPOL 2018, pp. 12-13)

(12) In addition to the territorial losses inflicted on IS over the past year, 2018 took its toll on the group's digital presence. […] Islamic State has continued to suffer an aggravating crisis over 2018. The decimation of its quasi-state was coupled with major and coordinated attacks against its official propaganda machine. In particular, the disruption efforts […] have continued to curtail the group's broadcasting capabilities, ensuring the wider public has less direct access to terrorist propaganda. As a result, propaganda produced by official IS media outlets has visibly declined - both in terms of quantity and quality. Moreover, its attempts to reach out to anglophone audiences have proved amateurish. […] The current conjuncture does provide a window of opportunity to capitalise on the organisation's disarray. In particular, combating the group's media network should remain a priority. (EUROPOL 2018, p. 27)

In example 10, Europol uses negative polarisation as a form of manipulation (van Dijk 2006) to reproduce *ingroup* trusted power (*trusted teams of experts* […] *in the timely exchange of information*) and discredit the *other* group's behaviour (*leaders repeatedly called for IS supporters and followers to bring the war to the heartland of Europe*), thus linking institutional commitment to

legality (*a significant number of individuals were identified*), while raising the doubt in the readership about the existence of *outgroup* concealed terrorists (*IS operatives and fighters began to enter Europe*) who may take advantage of migratory flows just to spread violent extremism. In this way the authorship skilfully anticipates an additional threat worth of being doubly securitised (*first reported for organised crime activities* […] *and later reported as terrorism suspects*), although the process of connecting migration to terrorism may be debatable.

Example 11 illustrates an instance of negative polarisation as applied to the inappropriate propaganda use of different labels and need for re-mediatisation affecting the *outgroup* image of jihadist terrorists. In this case, negative representation of jihadists (either Islamic State or al-Quaeda terrorists) is rendered through the idea of a fragmented identity as a group (*conscious of their disjointed appearance*), which is in Europol's mind clearly far from a close-knit terrorist network. Therefore, *outgroup* is shown as failing to deliver a unified ideological position (*long-standing ideological dispute*); IS ideology and organisation here are featured with all its inconsistencies (*less like disparate groups*) deriving from a dishomogeneous situation (*need to appear more as a monolithic bloc*). Consequently, the *other*'s internal attrition (*long-standing* […] *dispute*) is unveiled and communication is ridiculed as self-referential and boastful (*propaganda that* […] *mimic the group's official braggadocio*). In this way, institutional identity can skilfully emerge and its role gains ground.

In another instance, in example 12, the focus is on the Islamic State's (IS) bad and inexpert utilization of internet resources for the indoctrination of followers (*propaganda* […] *has visibly declined* […] *in* […] *quantity and quality*), so as to juxtapose an appearance of high institutional professionalism on the one side, with the lack of skills and critical inexperience on the other. Therefore, concepts such as Europol's proactive approach (*major and coordinated attacks*) and the IS underestimation of the problem (*attempts* […] *have proved amateurish*) are contrasted (*disruption efforts* […] *curtail the group's broadcasting capabilities*), so as to let *ingroup* coordination and shared knowledge emerge as opposed to *outgroup* disorganisation. This strategy, while usefully safeguarding institutional decision-making identity (Hansson 2017, p. 230), also portraits intelligence experts as being, in turn, in the current position of fruitfully taking advantage of IS deficiencies (*a window of opportunity to capitalise on the organisation's disarray*), thus reflecting well on law-enforcement behaviour and probably with the intent of hiding possible failures. In this way, while describing the *other*'s dismal identity as losing ground and capacity to slay European values and people, Europol's ethical role and accountable identity can be auspiciously publicised in the war for security.

7. Concluding remarks

The findings that emerge from the analysis of Europol's reports suggest some final considerations. The texts analysed have quantitatively and qualitatively reflected the current state of raised societal insecurity in the EU and have conceptualised the organisation as opposed to terrorists according to *group*-polarisation. Europol's positive *self*-representation has often engaged the notion of leadership, coalition and protection, presenting the organisation as a unified group committed to safeguarding European well-being. *Ingroup* polarisation, has been shaped in terms of a trusted identity and ethical conduct and conveyed by the *stability* metaphor expressing a solid and protective identity, but also by verbs involving the notion of *fight* and evaluative modifiers endorsing the fairness of the 'war on terror' and inducing the fears of danger. *Outgroup* polarisation instead, has deliberately affected the representation of terrorists with discredit or suspicion to limit their ideological/organisational potential and has been used to legitimise the agency's freedom "to act on behalf of what […] *they* take to be the rights and interests of the members of a society" (Dunn 1988, p. 83) and thus sustain ideology. In particular, the act of blaming the *outgroup* or crafting the *other'*s behaviour as an additional threat to security, has revealed a possible security inadequacy against the unpredictability of terrorism and the need to emphasise repressive control in the event of institutional deterioration in credibility.

The study also confirms that the discursive propaganda of Europol's leadership not only empowers its role in security, but also establishes beneficial cooperation among its partners and consolidates satisfactory public recognition. However, the securitisation of specific topics in times of terror, such as the problematisation of migration into a security question, has reflected an arguable and inevitably prejudicial nature of intelligence knowledge which is not always easy to receive acceptance from the intended readership and to be ethically translated into action.

Bionote: Chiara Prosperi Porta is an English language lecturer at Sapienza University of Rome. Since 2002 she has taught as Adjunct Professor at B.A. and M.A. levels in the Faculties of Economics, Humanities, Law and Medicine. She has also been assistant researcher of English in the Faculty of Economics and has been teaching English for the Carabinieri International Cooperation Office, as well as technical English in the post-graduate course in Applied Chemistry for the Italian Military. Her interests are mainly in ESP and EAP, with particular reference to scientific discourse and genre analysis, technological genre and communication in professional/institutional settings. She has published widely on these subjects, including a book *European Institutional English*,

Rome (2018) and “Knowledge Dissemination and Ideology in the Discourse of Securitisation and Control in the EU” in RILA vol.1-2019, Bulzoni, Rome (2019).

Author’s address: chiara.prosperiporta@uniroma1.it

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