

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the discourse surrounding the differential treatment between Syrian and Ukrainian refugees. This topic is relevant because it challenges the common assumption that humanitarianism is neutral by showing how it can reproduce colonial hierarchies in refugee governance. This research seeks to answer how postcolonial legacies shape the process of “Othering” that results in France’s differential treatment towards certain refugee groups. Prior studies have not adequately addressed the entanglement among Orientalism, postcolonialism, and securitization, leaving a conceptual gap that this thesis aims to fill. By comparing the treatment received by Syrian and Ukrainian refugees, this study explains how racialized perceptions of threat, cultural proximity, and Europeanness inform France’s refugee response. This research employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine policy documents, political speeches, and media coverage that reflect the French government’s attitudes and framing. Ultimately, this study argues that France’s contrasting responses reveal the persistence of racialized hierarchies within European humanitarianism.

Keywords: France, Refugee Policy, Ukrainian Refugees, Syrian Refugees, Migration Policy, Postcolonialism, Securitization, Orientalism, Media Framing, Racial Hierarchies