Pursuing multiple aims in European Parliamentary debates: debating EU immigration policies as a case in point

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Abstract:
In this paper, I aim to shed light on the multi-purposive nature of debates in the European Parliament. In these debates, Members of European Parliament (MEPs) pursue several institutional aims (further national interests, negotiate a European identity, promote political groups agendas, hold the EU executive bodies to account for their performance, etc.). In particular, I examine the debate on immigration in the wake of the exceptional migratory flows from North Africa early this year. By analysing the different points of view argued for by MEPs in their contributions to this debate, I aim at identifying the different aims that are typically pursued by MEPs in such debates and the ways in which argumentation is employed in this pursuit.