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Uses and Abuses of the Past in Legitimation of the Present. Central European Discourse on Collective Identity in Times of Contemporary Refugee Crisis.

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Analogical reasoning strikes again in Central European contemporary discourse on collective identity in times of refugee crisis. This paper suggests that policy makers and opinion leaders in Central Europe use and often abuse the past in legitimising policy making on contemporary refugee crisis. The role of analogical reasoning in extraordinary policy situations had been already acknowledged to be an important explanatory strategy in social science. David Patrick Houghton's study on the US foreign policy making in the Iranian hostage crisis is an insightful case in point.¹ Still, relatively little attention is paid to this explanatory strategy in contemporary policy analyses touching upon political and social reactions in Central Europe to current refugee crisis. In what follows I intend to explain why does history matter in justifying current Central European policy making on refugee crisis? In doing so I will elaborate on uses and abuses of modern European history in Central European public debate on implications of refugee crisis on collective identity construction.

Key words: analogical reasoning, policy making, collective identity, Central Europe, refugee crisis;

1. Conceptualising analogical reasoning in social science or why does history matter in justifying current policy making?

As the nature and the character of contemporary international crises reveal how policy-makers and opinion leaders become more and more incapable to come up with efficient remedies to complex and new challenges we do observe a recurrent tendency to analogical reasoning in legitimising policy making as well as public reaction to it.

¹ David Patrick Houghton, *US Foreign Policy and the Iran Hostage Crisis*, Cambridge University Press 2004

Current refugee crisis in Europe and its policy-making implications constitute an excellent case in point illustrating both legitimising and explanatory power of analogical reasoning. Policy makers as well as opinion leaders have always been referring to historical precedents in order to justify their actions and opinions in situations they are either incapable or willing or both to come with their own creative solutions.

This phenomenon was insightfully approached by David Patrick Houghton who explained the role of analogical reasoning in Jimmy Carter's policy towards the Iranian hostage crisis.² Of special relevance to this study there is Houghton's explanation of how much crisis policy making has been increasingly framed in the context of analogical reasoning as major mechanism of making sense out of unknown crisis situations.

Based on the tradition of cognitive psychology, Houghton builds his understanding of analogical reasoning as „*a cognitive mechanism that tends to be used when an individual is confronted by novel or unusual circumstances*”³ Houghton then goes on correlating findings of cognitive psychology in novel crisis situations with historical and political science analysis of policy making in unprecedented situations. Analogical reasoning is expected to offer answers to two set of questions according to Houghton: „*First of all, many authors have pondered the time-honoured question of whether the past is generally a useful or misleading guide to the present and future. Neustadt and May's Thinking in Time, for instance, is intended as a kind of 'how-to-do-it' manual for policy-making, being primarily concerned with the question of how decision-makers can make better use of historical lessons [...]The second set of questions has to do with the status of analogizing as a cause, rather than an effect, of decision-making. Given that analogizing undoubtedly takes place, what role do analogies generally play? Are they cognitive tools used for making sense of a complex world, or simply ex-post mechanisms which decision-makers employ with the sole intention of convincing their colleagues of the appropriateness of a pre-set course of action*”⁴

In this study I will be referring to Houghton's understanding of analogical reasoning in explaining policy making and public debate in Central Europe over the current refugee crisis.

In what follows I intend to explain uses and misuses of European history in policy making and public debate in Central Europe over the current refugee crisis and the way historical analogies, which are applied in refugee crisis debate serve as excellent device for domestic policy purposes.. Specifically, I will focus on explaining the role of analogical reasoning in

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. p. 24

⁴ Ibid. p. 32

collective identity construction along the lines of Muslim refugees as significant others for contemporary societies in Central Europe. In doing so I will refer to Christopher Hemmer's diagnosis according to which: „*While policy makers are constrained by their beliefs, they are also capable of deliberately selecting a specific analogy based on explicit judgments regarding which potential historical parallel holds the information that is most useful to them [...], this analogical freedom of choice does not mean that the selection process is a purely instrumental one where policy makers already know what policy they want to implement and then decide what analogy will be most effective in selling that policy.*”⁵

Let us first, however, provide for an orientation of how do scholars conceptualise explanatory power of analogical reasoning in social science in general and in some of its disciplines in particular.

Andrew Mumford offers an insightful view on the evolution of the use of analogical reasoning from purely rational into ideological justification of policy making in international relations.⁶ As he contends: „*since the beginning of the ‘War on Terror’, we have arguably seen the rise of a more potent form of analogy, namely ones that are selected because they fulfil an ideological function. Analogical reasoning as a tool of rational decision making has increasingly become replaced by analogical reasoning as a tool of trenchant ideologically informed policy justification*”⁷

Mumford's approach to conceptualisation of analogical reasoning in contemporary international relations allows to understand the phenomenon of securitisation of refugee crisis debate. Mass and uncontrolled inflow of mostly Muslim refugees and migrants to Europe is given by policy makers, mostly although not exclusively in Central Europe, as major reason of intensification of terrorist acts across Europe. Viktor Orban's migration policy is a clear case of ideologically motivated policy justification where analogical reasoning is used to construct the sense of threat that is acknowledged to be direct consequence of mass inflow of Muslim migrants who are approached as culturally hostile to traditional Christian values as foundation of Hungarian national identity.

⁵ Christopher Hemmer, *Which Lessons Matter? American Foreign Policy Decision Making in the Middle East, 1979-1987*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2000, p. 14; cited after: *Bad Analogical Reasoning and Post-War Operations In Iraq after 2003* by Charles-Philippe David and Karine Prémont, p. 3, retrieved from <https://wpsa.research.pdx.edu/> accessed on 10; August 2017

⁶ Andrew Mumford, *Parallels, prescience and the past: Analogical reasoning and contemporary international politics*, *International Politics* (2015) 52, 1–19.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 1

I shall elaborate on this point in the second part of this paper. Here, however, let us refer to research paper by András Szalai and Gabriella Göbl who explain the phenomenon of securitisation of Hungarian migration policy by means of ideologically oriented policy of branding Muslim migrants and refugees as significant others against whom traditional Hungarian national identity is developed and defended.⁸ As Szalai and Göbl argue: *„Prime Minister Viktor Orban first mentioned his plans of regulating migration into Hungary in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January 2015, after which the government launched a coordinated campaign that demonized migrants as a threat to national security, irrespective of personal motivations. The Hungarian government’s strong anti-immigration rhetoric and policies that followed—most importantly the construction of a border fence in the South—have shocked many observers, begging the question of what made such a shift possible and how it came about. Xenophobic tendencies in Hungary have been steadily increasing since the introduction of the campaign, and the discourse by now clearly dominated by the security frame. Though the precise mechanisms of persuasion and their effectiveness are still under investigation, this paper is based on the assumption that the increase in hostility towards migrants in Hungary can be linked to the government securitization campaign. Success so defined is puzzling as the campaign predated the summer migration wave, meaning that at the time of its launch, the everyday Hungarian had no real experience with mass migration”*⁹

To conclude this very brief outline of different conceptualizations of analogical reasoning in contemporary scholarly debate let us refer to Charles-Philippe David and Karine Prémont and their typology of different criteria used by policy makers when they decide which historical analogy to apply in a specific new situation to optimise success in convincing public opinion about legitimate character of specific policy instruments.¹⁰

Based on extensive state-of-the art in the field of analogical reasoning in foreign policy analysis, David and Prémont identify three major criteria, which determine which historical analogy is chosen in particular policy situation. They are as follows: „analogy’s proximity in time”, „the policy-makers’ personal and historical experience” and last but not least „the prescriptive power of analogous event.”¹¹

The analogy’s proximity in time is understood in this typology in terms of resemblance of historical event to current policy dilemma, which justifies similar reaction

⁸ András Szalai and Gabriella Göbl, *Securitizing Migration in Contemporary Hungary*, Central European University Working Papers, Budapest, 30 November 2015, retrieved from <https://cens.ceu.edu/sites/> accessed on 11 August 2017

⁹ Ibid. p. 2

¹⁰ Charles-Philippe David and Karine Prémont, *Bad Analogical Reasoning...*, op.cit. p. 2

¹¹ Ibid., p.2

in similar circumstances. The policy-makers' personal and historical experience, on the other hand, is built upon the phenomenon of so called generational memory, which serves as spectrum of analogous policy reactions constitutive for generational identity of a given political group. Finally, the prescriptive power of the analogous event refers to expectation of successful outcome of particular policy-making strategy to be applied in analogous policy situation.¹²

In the empirical case study analysis of this paper I will refer to prescriptive power of the analogous event as explanatory perspective, which seems particularly relevant when analysing ideologically motivated analogical reasoning in current policy-making towards refugee crisis in Central Europe.

2. Analogical reasoning in policy making and public debate on refugee crisis and collective identity construction in Central Europe

The case of of Hungarian policy on current refugee crisis in Europe is frequently approached as most clear illustration of ideologically driven analogical reasoning.¹³ However, it needs to be emphasised that this pattern of analogical reasoning has been also present – albeit in different forms and intensity – in other countries in Central Europe as well.

What makes the Hungarian case of analogical reasoning in migration policy special is that it has been built on powerful symbol of the barbed wire wall that is meant to protect Hungary and the whole of Christian Europe against the mass inflow of Muslim migrants. This rhetoric receives a great attention across Europe as it triggers connotations with still vivid memory of Europe divided by the Berlin Wall during the Cold War. Although building anti-migration walls and fences is not exclusively related to the migration policy of the current Hungarian government, it is its justification that makes it somehow special and unique. Here we need to emphasise strong biological ethno-culturalism as an ideological vision of national community that must be protected. We find this rhetoric explicitly present in Viktor Orbán's migration policy: *„We want a Europe that recognizes that any community that is incapable of biologically preserving itself is doomed to disappear. We do not want any policies that back immigration, nor do we want migrating masses that cause tension that is impossible to*

¹² Ibid.

¹³ See especially: Jan Blažek, Resistance to the securitisation of migration in Hungary: the MIGSZOL network as a case of radical cosmopolitics, retrieved from <http://www.visegradexperts.eu> accessed on 12 August 2017

contain [...] While I am prime minister, Hungary will definitely not become an immigration destination. We don't want to see significantly sized minorities with different cultural characteristics and backgrounds among us. We want to keep Hungary as Hungary”¹⁴

Analogical reasoning in Viktor Orbán's migration policy rhetoric has been most explicitly present in his speeches delivered on the anniversaries of the 1848/49 revolution and war for independence. In his speech of 15 March 2017 the analogy of 1848/49 serves as „moral compass” and justification of ethno-cultural stand on what constitutes Hungarian national identity as well as European identity today: *„Lajos Kossuth said that we are a nation, and we have the right and the strength to pursue our own goals, and not to be the tools of foreign ambitions. Perhaps neither the past nor the future of the Hungarian nation matters to Brussels and international capital – but they matter to us. Perhaps the security of the European people does not matter to Brussels and international capital – but it matters to us. Perhaps whether or not we remain Hungarian does not matter to Brussels and international capital – but it matters to us. We know what János Arany expressed thus in verse: “If the storm of times blows us away, God will be never more have Hungarians.” This is also true today, and this is what is at stake in today's European rebellion. In defence of our independence and national sovereignty, we must bravely fight the battles that lie ahead of us. We must stop Brussels: we must protect our borders; we must prevent the resettlement of migrants; we must make the networks that receive their funding from abroad transparent; we must keep the right to regulate taxes, wages and household utility charges here at home. And in this, Dear Friends, we can only rely on ourselves. Therefore we must continue to keep the responsibility of governance within the nation.”¹⁵*

Another element of analogical reasoning in Viktor Orbán's migration policy rhetoric is to be found in emphasising the 1848 Hungarian-Polish brotherhood in arms, which finds in relevance in today's Europe. As Viktor Orbán emphasised in his 15 March speech: *„Allow me to extend heartfelt greetings to our friends who have come here from Poland. It is important for us that today you are here with us again – as you were in 1848”¹⁶*

In similar vein we find rhetoric of defence of Christian roots of Europe undermined by Muslim immigrants as moral obligation and justification of the current Polish government policy on refugee crisis. Current Polish migration policy under Law and Justice government is

¹⁴ Cited after: Jan Blažek, Resistance to the securitisation of migration in Hungary: the MIGSZOL network as a case of radical cosmopolitics, retrieved from <http://www.visegradexperts.eu> accessed on 12 August 2017, pp. 2-3

¹⁵ “Our Task Is To Safeguard The Country For Them” – Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's March 15 Speech, retrieved from <http://www.hungarytoday.hu>, accessed on 10 August 2017

¹⁶ Ibid.

build upon securitisation of refugee crisis. The emphasis in this policy is given on correlation of migration inflow with acceleration of terrorist attacks in Europe and the imperative to protect Polish citizens from terrorist threat caused by Muslim immigrants. Diagnosis and policy making of the current Polish government related to refugee crisis in Europe display strong elements of analogical reasoning as well. Mariusz Błaszczak, the Polish minister of interior, diagnosed and warned that: „*In agreeing to take in refugees, the [previous government] put a ticking bomb under us. We're defusing that bomb... [accepting refugees] is a straight road to a social catastrophe, with the result that in a few years Warsaw could look like Brussels*”¹⁷

Constructing collective fear psychosis became leitmotiv of the current Polish government policy towards refugees. A spectacular example of such policy was a diagnosis made by the Law and Justice leader, Jarosław Kaczyński who claimed that: “*There are already signs of the emergence of very dangerous diseases which haven't been seen in Europe for a long time... various types of parasites, protozoa, which aren't dangerous in the organisms of these people but which could be dangerous here.*”¹⁸

Constructing collective fear psychosis against Muslim refugees is crucial element of grand political vision to keep Poland an ethnically and culturally homogenous nation. Despite repeated calls of Pope Francis and the Episcopacy of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland asking for solidarity and humanitarian approach to refugees the current government rejects any possibility to accept refugees for the sake of protection of Polish citizens from immigrants who constitute a vital threat to national security. This seems to find its manifestation in what Elżbieta Witek, former chief of the prime minister's office noticed: „*A good Christian is someone who helps, not necessarily by accepting refugees.*”¹⁹ This diagnosis seems to be in line with what Jan Cienski argues in his article published in POLITICO recently: „*The blood-drenched harrowing of the war, followed by post-war border shifts and ethnic cleansing, created a racially pure Poland for the first time in history — fulfilling the dreams of earlier*

¹⁷ Cited after: Jan Cienski, Why Poland doesn't want refugees. An ethnically homogenous nation ;battles EU efforts to distribute asylum seekers. POLITICO, 21 May 2107, retrieved from <http://www.politico.eu>, accessed 13 August 2017

¹⁸ Cited after: Bart Bachman, Diminishing Solidarity: Polish Attitudes toward the European Migration and Refugee Crisis, retrieved from: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org> accessed on 11 August 2017

¹⁹ Cited after: Jan Cienski, Why Poland doesn't want refugees..., op.cit.

generations of extreme nationalists. Despite being in the EU, there's little appetite in Poland to create a West-European style multi-ethnic society."²⁰

Biological ethno-culturalism seems also an ideological inspiration for current Slovak migration policy. Here, similarly to Hungarian and Polish cases, we can find strong elements of analogical reasoning in policy making towards refugee crisis. In case of Slovak policy making towards refugees we can identify similar patterns of reasoning as compared to Polish and Hungarian approaches. Consequently we can hear about Christians alone who could possibly integrate well into Slovak society as repeatedly confirmed by representatives of Slovak government: *"only Christians have good chances to integrate transparently into our society. We are not against religion and this is not discrimination. From the Slovak point of view it is just an effort to succeed with integration."*²¹

Like in case of Polish interior minister position towards refugee crisis Muslim migrants are perceived as hypothetical terrorists. Robert Fico, Slovak prime minister, assures that; „*we are monitoring every single Muslim' on Slovak territory.*"²²

Analogical reasoning in Slovak migration policy rhetoric is evidenced particularly strong in comparing Muslim immigrants with Roma population living in Slovakia. Both groups are considered alien to traditional Slovak life style. Thus they constitute a threat to national identity. Robert Fico frankly admitted that: *"After all, we are not able to integrate our own Roma citizens, of whom we have hundreds of thousands. How can we integrate people who are somewhere else with their traditions, religion, and way of life?"*²³

Last but not least, an analogical reasoning in migration policy rhetoric in Central Europe analysis is the case of the Czech Republic debate. Here the attitude of Miloš Zeman, the president of the republic, seems most sharpest example of how strong analogical reasoning has been in migration policy debate in Central Europe. Zeman's *idée fixe* is association of Muslim migrants with jihad to be executed on Europeans, including Czechs. Possible „super-Holocaust" appears in Zeman's vocabulary as description of consequences of

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Cited after: Jarmila Androvičova, The Migration and refugee crisis in political discourse in Slovakia: Institutionalized Securitization and Moral Panic, Acta Universitatis Carolinae, Territorialia 2, 2016 p. 51

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

uncontrolled flow of Muslim migrants to Czech Republic.²⁴ Jihad super-Holocaust to be executed on Europeans, including Czechs, is a possible scenario as a consequence of mass inflow of Muslim migrants who might contribute to radicalisation of Muslim community living in Europe. To master up his argument Zeman invoked to case of radicalisation of German society in early years of the Third Reich. As he tried to convince chancellor Angela Merkel during her visit in Prague in August 2016: *„In the 30s, the overwhelming majority of Germans were decent people, the nation of Goethe and Schiller and so on. In a few years, they became Nazis, even fanatic Nazis. And the radicalisation of the – till these times – moderate Muslim population might be like the case of the German population. It might be easier than the German population, [because] you have a very radical ideology based on a religion.*”²⁵

²⁴ Cited after: Rober Tait, Miloš Zeman: the hardline Czech leader fanning hostility to refugees, The Guardian, 14 September 2016, retrieved from: <http://www.the-guardian.com>, accessed on 10 August 2017

²⁵ Ibid.

To complement the picture of migration policy rhetoric in Central Europe on refugee crisis as seen through conceptual lens of analogical reasoning let me refer to the Visegrad Group policy on the refugee crisis in Europe. The Visegrad Group countries, namely Poland, Czech Republic Hungary and Slovakia, divided otherwise in many policy areas such as policy towards Russia, approach the question of refugee crisis unanimously. Protection of Schengen borders and fighting root causes of illegal migration constitute common denominator of the V4 policy on refugee crisis. As opposed to the European Commission policy of solidarity and shared responsibility exemplified in refugees quota relocation system the V4 focuses on externalisation of refugee problem by doing whatever it takes to prevent migrants from entering the territory of the EU. This clarifies why does the Polish government refuse to accept a single refugee under the European Commission relocation scheme. All of this is consistent with overall policy of fortress Europe as remedy of Central European policy-makers to refugee crisis. As confirmed in the Joint Statement of V4 Interior Ministers on the Establishment of the Migration Crisis Response Mechanism adopted in Warsaw, November 21, 2016: *„Our assessment of the EU’s experience in tackling the influx of illegal migrants it has witnessed in 2015 and 2016 leads us to a conclusion that solutions introducing mandatory relocation of migrants, whether based on an ad-hoc decisions or a permanent mechanism, cannot be considered as effective measures to address such influx. The EU has shown inability to implement such measures and their introduction has even led to unnecessary divisions among the Member States. Moreover, we are of the opinion that relocation of migrants who do not qualify for international protection constitutes an additional pull factor for irregular migration. For these reasons we must reject mandatory relocations of illegal migrants or a similar permanent mechanism becoming a part of the EU’s response to the migration crisis. We acknowledge that uncontrolled mixed migration movements are a threat to the EU and Member States security. Concerned with the safety of our citizens, we agree that it is a threat that cannot be underestimated.”*²⁶

²⁶ Joint Statement of V4 Interior Ministers on the Establishment of the Migration Crisis Response Mechanism In Warsaw, November 21, 2016, retrieved from: <http://visegradgroup.eu>, accessed on 10 August 2017

Conclusion

In this paper I attempted to draw attention to analogical reasoning as an analytical concept in investigation of how does refugee crisis policy making shape the discourse on collective identity in Central Europe today. Analogical reasoning has been for long time known as useful analytical tool in foreign policy analysis. David Patrick Houghton's seminal study on the US foreign policy making in the Iran hostage crisis has frequently been given as perfect example.

Going beyond standard version of foreign policy making analysis my intention was to show explanatory value of analogical reasoning when applied to research on migration policy making and its impact on collective identity transformations in times of refugee crisis in Europe with special emphasis given to Central European case study.

Having analysed selected case studies of uses and misuses of European history as strategy legitimising current migration policy of Central European policy makes we can come to the conclusion that ideologically driven analogical reasoning dominates in refugee crisis debates in Central Europe. The prescriptive power of analogous event has been a useful strategy for policy-makers in Central Europe to use refugee crisis rhetoric as an instrument to build a vision of ethno-cultural national identity where Muslim immigrants serve as significant others against whom national communities based on traditional Christian values need to be protected.

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