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“ADVANCING DIVERSITY”

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Securitised Migration of the Other in Hungary: A Fantasy Created by the Politics of Fear

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The concept ‘politics of fear’ refers to the utilisation of fear by political actors as a manipulative tool. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli (1988) suggests rulers be feared than to be loved because it is a safer option as well as an effective one due to the belief that it is easy to govern if the population is vulnerable. The politics of insecurity, with an increasing commonality, plays a key role in exclusionary identity politics since the Cold War Era and the ‘war on terror.’ Fear is a subject of a politicisation process and consequently, it jumps on the bandwagon, becomes a political tool to shape and control the masses and therefore it is a fragment of the narratives and discourses that form the *status quo*. The anxiety within the society is not a part of the political relations naturally, but mainly constructed by other governing actors, as Furedi (2007) calls them ‘fear entrepreneurs’.

Although it is possible for an agent “to politicise an issue without securitising it” (Bourdeau, 2011), this culture of fear spread in the recent years to more nations and became a part of protectionist security agendas. Owing to the escalating need of dislocation of people mainly from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Eritrea and Somalia; migration engaged even more to the political discourses and security practices. As Huysmans (2006: 45) argues, the accumulation of insecurity reveals itself in issues like migration. Hence, for a ‘fear entrepreneur’, marrying migration with securitisation is one of the most likely scenarios.

In this paper, it will be argued that the politics of fear is deeply linked to and used to securitise migration by the governments and its agents. In addition, the way and the scope of politics of fear impact the securitisation of migration will be questioned. To illustrate this argument, the Hungarian example on the anti-migrant measures taken in 2015 will be presented, since it is one of the geographies that widely face with migrant flows as a transit country (KSH, 2018). In the securitisation of migration, the securitising agent needs to display migrants as an existential danger to the nation and its values, identity and norms. Consequently, an identification of the party that should fear is necessary; securitising actor attributes some qualifications to the migrants within the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion. In this essay, this process will be explained with the ‘Self and the Other’ perception. Concurrently, to reveal how the media contributed to this process, ‘framing’ concept will be described and used to analyse.

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How to securitise migration through politics of fear?

According to Buzan (1998: 24-25), the elements of national security are dependent on the maintenance of the nation's 'independent identity' and 'functional integrity.' Securitisation processes are rooted in the creation of an 'intersubjective threat perception' by the securitising agent to protect these two elements. Therefore, securitiser obtains the right to securitise the knowledge -hence the power (Foucault, 1991)- and re-imagines the sense of reality. This perception declares the threat of existential and legitimises the possible 'extraordinary measures.' The speech-act approach of security examines three kinds of units involved in the process: *referent objects* which are the ones that are existentially threatened, *securitising actors* which are the ones who are securitising the condition; announcing that the referent objects are in danger and *functional actors* who are the third parties that can influence and change the dynamics (Buzan, 1998: 35-36).

In the context of securitisation of migration, fear is used as a glue to hold the nation together and the identity of the migrating party functions as an 'other' that needs to be alienated to keep the national identity and culture homogenous. The narrative created illustrates that society will be in conflict only if an external factor is involved and 'annihilates' it (Huysmans, 2006: 49). At this point, it would not be erroneous to say that security framing works on the basis of constructing insecurity, distributing fear and trust as well as densification of alienation, and, in align with that, a distribution of the identity as "us" and the "other" or "the source of the threat" (Buzan, 1998; Campbell, 1993; Waever et al., 1993). Insecurities, which are usually generated by uncertainty and change, are exposed to a political construction of an existential threat. There are two different perspectives that can elucidate the relationship between insecurities and securitisation: logic of exception and logic of unease (Bourdeau, 2011: 131-132). The logic of exception refers to speech acts that are constructed in *exceptional times*; for instance, in the case of an existential threat. On the other hand, the logic of unease -based on the Foucaultian systems of thought- promulgates that these discourses are around the clock: a routine of security practices. Whereas logic of exception asserts that speech act is relevant only if the threat is an overarching and a destructive threat, logic of unease sees securitisation as a part of the daily to-do list of a securitising actor.

Another significant way of explaining the securitisation of migration is by using the idea of the Self and the Other. This concept has its roots in Hegel's assumption that by identifying the other, one also gives an identity and recognition to itself, therefore, describing the self or the Other is mutually constitutive acts. The creation of Other requires dissimilarity from the self in terms of social identity: cultural, religious, national and ethnic difference and most of the times, Otherness ends up with enfranchisement. The discourses on the 'risky other' (Hudson, 2003) aims to consolidate the sense of belonging to a nation by differentiating that Other. Cultural, ethnic and religious differences between the migrants and the already-existing society enact in the Othering process, the securitiser builds similar identities for its nation to trust and dissimilar identities to be afraid of and

as a result, to refrain from. The narrative created focuses on the belief that the migrants were polluting the homogenous nation. In this essay, this type of dystopianism will be explained with the Hungarian example.

Hungarian Example on Securitisation of Migration

Historically, securitisation of migration was not as intense as it is now in the Western hemisphere (Murphy, 2007: 52). Before the 1980s, states like the USA and Canada were advocating pro-immigrant policies to stimulate the economy and social relations; the West needed immigrant workers. This attitude gained a new stratum in the last decades, mainly due to the narratives of the 9/11 attack and the 'war on terror' created. In those examples, fear of Islam and Muslim immigrants was used as a nation-connecting scapegoat, and since then, states started to pursue more protectionist policies in terms of migration. In 2015, the migratory flow that is mainly originated from the Middle East and Central Asia reached its peak, and Europe found itself in a blur. The main stemming point was conflict zones like Syria; therefore, Turkey, Greece, Italy and Eastern European states like Bulgaria, Hungary, Croatia were the main destinations. Although these migratory movements affected all these countries, in this essay, only Hungary will be analysed. According to Thorleifsson (2017: 321), Hungary was only a transit country, just a stop on the road to Western Europe and better opportunities. Although this still may be the ultimate goal, the statistics suggest otherwise. Whereas in 2014, the number of asylum seekers who granted international protection status was 42,777, in 2015, it reached 177,135 (KSH, 2018). This sudden shift from passive migration status to an active one started an alert within the ruling party.

In 2015, as a result of the before-mentioned watershed, the securitisation policies started to take place within Hungary. In spring 2015, the anti-migrant campaign of the main parties -Fidesz¹ and Jobbik²- started to use media "effectively", all over the country billboards were saying "If you come to Hungary, you must respect our culture", "If you come to Hungary, you must abide by our laws", "If you come to Hungary, you cannot take our jobs" in Hungarian. Therefore, Othering started with trying to convince the Self, the aim was to provoke the people of Hungary (Népszabadság on 9th June 2015 cited in Kiss, 2016). The discourse of the campaign was dangerously reactionary because, in the consultation papers³ that are received by nearly 8 million Hungarians, PM draws a causal link between the terrorist attack to the staff of Charlie Hebdo and the arrival of Muslim migrants to France (Juhász, 2016: 40). Gábor Vona, leader of the Jobbik

¹ Fidesz is a populist, right-wing party that is dominating Hungarian politics since 2010. The president of the party is the current Prime Minister of the country, Viktor Orbán (NSD).

² Jobbik is a far-right wing, radical and nationalist party in Hungary and currently, they are the current second largest party in the Hungarian parliament (NSD).

³ In 2015, the government decided to send consultation papers to the nation on issues immigration and terrorism (Juhász, 2017:40).

party, posted on Facebook: “We must prevent the quota⁴ because we cannot know who refugees, immigrants or terrorists are” (Thorleiffson, 2017: 323). Linking terrorism with migrants, this bluntly may be interpreted as being myopic to possible outcomes. Securitisers that use these kinds of discourses may not only “unify” the nation, the migrants may turn into a pernicious force since both parties will be more protective and even aggressive to defend their identity (Huysmans, 2006: 54). Hence, it is appropriate to say Othering process contains an existential paradox, and this possible chain of events may be called the *Self-fulfilling Prophecy of Othering*.

As mentioned before, the cultural, ethnic and religious differences outshine and become a part of the narratives. Hungarian discourse was that the migrants were posing a threat to national culture as well as the Christian community (Thorleiffson, 2007: 319). The securitising actor, in some cases, may use the historically instituted motives to support the speech act (Huysmans, 2006: 126). In the Hungarian case, this situation showed itself in the Ottoman experience of the country, which is associated with the disruption of the religious texture of the state. According to an article in *The Independent* (2018), Viktor Orbán announced refugees as ‘Muslim invaders’ and he announced that “the Christian and Muslim communities will never unite.” In another article in *The New York Times* (2015), Orbán created a ‘collective European Self’ and said, “European identity is deeply rooted in Christianity” and he tried to justify the protective measures with the aim of “keeping Europe Christian.” Although these narratives were created by the governing elite on behalf of the whole of Europe, the European Union and most of the European community highly criticised Hungarian migrant policies. Orbán found European responses ineffective to solve the migration “problem” and declared that Hungary was left alone in protecting the nation’s sake (National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism/Letter of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán cited in Juhász, 2017: 40). This argument is highly deniable since the European Union was not as friendly as it promoted: it brought the issue to its security agenda and took protectionist measures like Dublin Regulations⁵ and Refugee Deal with Turkey⁶ to block the migratory flow. However, these measures were not as aggressive, and discourses were more refugee-friendly.

Actions spoke louder than words in Hungarian example as well: walls were reified starting from 2015, when the government decided to close its border with Serbia and moreover, to the border with Serbia and Croatia, they erected steel and barbed wire fences whereas, with Romania, it is still under consideration.

⁴ In 2015, France and Germany suggested EU to have obligatory quotas to enforce member states to accept a certain number of refugees. Hungary was one of the main opponents of this idea (Guardian, 2015).

⁵ This regulation basically identifies which member state is responsible from the asylum-seekers and according to this regulation, the first entering country is responsible for the examination of the asylum-seeker (EU Commission)

⁶ In 2016, European Union and Turkey agreed on returning irregular refugees and asylum-seekers back to Turkey in the case if their application was inadmissible (European Parliament).

Politics of fear played a crucial role in the Hungarian electoral campaigns. In addition to the claims of existential threat, the government used economic insecurities of society. Orbán declared that, instead of immigrants, the funding should be received by the poor Hungarian families (Juhász, 2017: 40), and he promised that the resources of Hungary will belong to Hungarians. The government also claimed that the migrants will come and take “the jobs and livelihoods of Hungarians” (Thorleifsson, 2017: 312). Orbán’s re-election in 2018 meant the justification of the anti-immigrant policies and demagogues; therefore, this outcome declared, the European Union and the international community should respect the nation’s will. At the end of the day, even in the securitisation of migration, policymaking is a two-level nested game⁷ (Putnam, 1988).

Another aspect of this securitisation was the labelling of the migrants by the media. In align with the Orbán’s discourses, media channels ‘framed’⁸ the issue (Entman, 1993). Orbán declared that “the overwhelming majority of people are not refugees because they are not coming from a war-stricken area” (*The New York Times*, 2015) and through vague generalisations, reflected them as if they are opportunistic job-seekers. Hungarian media used the words “refugee”, “asylum-seeker”, “migrant” etc. interchangeably regardless of the social and legal differences between them (Kiss, 2016: 59). These media outlets showed no effort and intention to be politically correct. Over and above, channels like Magyar Nemzet, TV2 and M1 occasionally called them as “economic immigrants” or “for-profit immigrants” (ibid). Although international media tried to contest the existing frame directed by the governing elite, re-election may be interpreted as the sign that international conscience failed to cascade⁹ the frame.

Conclusion

In the essay, the link between the politics of fear and the securitisation of migration was questioned, and through the Hungarian model of securitisation, this link tried to be illustrated. First, the politics of fear was discussed. As Furedi (2007) claims, fear is a part of this century’s sentience, coherently, it is a window of opportunity in security policies and encounters with securitisation. Since this essay focused on the securitisation of migration, the existential threat that is necessary for the birth of securitisation act was deeply linked to the representation of migrants as communities to be afraid of. For that cause, the Self and the Other concept was explained and connected to the declaration of migrants as *persona non grata* due to the Othering process. Othering works on the basis of underlying cultural, religious, societal and identity-related differences. In

⁷ This is a political model that is used to explain how domestic politics may affect international politics and negotiations.

⁸ Framing refers to the relationship between the governing elites and the media outlets. When a policy arises, government has the opportunity to control how it is reflected to the people and this is called framing.

⁹ In some cases of framing, a competent party arises and tries to deconstruct the framed issue. When the existing frame is reinforced for a change, it cascades.

the Hungarian example, Othering was a crucial part of the announcement of Muslim refugees as an existential threat to the “brethren”. To illustrate this process, discourse analysis of Orbán’s rhetoric took place. In addition, the role of the media in the securitisation of migration was discussed and concluded that the governing elite’s framing enacted in this process.

The Orbán government, beyond being insouciant to the refugee problems, first, demonised them in discourse and then revitalised the speech-act with physically wired fences to the borders. This policy was consistent with his dystopic ‘promises’, because, after 2015, the number of asylum seekers in Hungary attenuated, it decreased from 177.135 to 29.432 in 2016 and eventually to 3.397 in 2017 (KSH, 2018). Furthermore, the Hungarian government legally securitised the issue, by presenting a new type of state-emergency: a Decree on “Crisis situation due to massive influx of migrants” which allowed the government to manage the “emergency” militarily without compromising (EMN, 2017: 10). It can be concluded that securitisation practices on migration were successful in Hungary, the securitising actor was able to convince the audience on the existence of an existential threat, eliminate the interference of the functional actors and frame the media. However, this consistency in the stigmatisation of refugees is far from being legitimate for the sake of the international community's responsibilities and its people.

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