**Migration controls in Italy and Hungary:**

 **Institutionalised and Discursive means of audience-making**

# Introduction

This article analyses the making of macro-politics of migration controls in Italy and Hungary. Its conceptual aim is to delineate institutionalised and discursive mechanisms of audience-making in two border states of the EU to garner support for migration controls. Noteworthy for our purposes is how the humanitarian discourse is undervalued as the EU border states emphasise either full securitisation or else securitisation as a condition for humanitarianism when it comes to refugee protection measures. In effect, our goal is to trace how both institutionalised and discursive mechanisms avail a clout to Italian and Hungarian politicians to affect everyday deliberations on Europeanisation when discussing migration. Both security and humanitarianism is widely felt and embedded in everyday reflections at the micro-social level on migration. Moreover, along with Euro, migration management is plausibly the most conspicuous manifestation of Europeanisation at this level. Reflecting on the institutional and discursive nexus of humanitarianism and securitization in effect to migration controls, our aim is to trace political narratives of Europeanisation geared to boost audiences at the micro-social level.

In this effort, our theoretical contribution will be raising the need to reconceptualise Europeanisation to take into account its audience at the micro-social level. Europeanisation followed a particularly institutionalist approach and macro-political outlook on the course of EU integration (see among others Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier eds. 2005; Schimmelfenning 2001; Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier 2004; Schimmelfenning 2002; Schimmelfenning, Freyburg, Lavenex, Skripka, and Wetzel 2015; Sedelmeier 2016 and 2012). Even if an identity element has become essential, this has concentrated on macro-identities of the accession states, rather than how Europeanisation clashed and conflicted with micro-identities. Recently, there is a shift in Europeanization research to understand identity politics in a more succinct way in effect to various crises. This shift presents how identity has contributed to further politicisation of Euro and Schengen crises (Borzel and Risse 2017). Yet, even this frame of Europeanisation still does not reach out to the micro-social level. In response to these literatures, our article foregrounds the securitization and humanitarianism nexus in migration policy and political narratives – a policy area that directly impinges on identity – and how such narratives seek to build audiences at the micro-social level.

We offer “old” and “new” EU member states as contexts, namely Italy and Hungary. The former embodies the EU maritime border whereas the latter is at the land border. In Hungary for much longer, but in Italy much recently, conservative right politics have become dominant. In order to see how migration politics is framed for everyday consumption, we are referring to slogans emerging in major political speeches in Italy and Hungary. Moreover, much recently, Orbán and Salvini declared their joint intention to build a coalition towards the European Parliament election. In this attempt, we are theoretically interested in the audience making potential of current policy and political narratives and discourses on migration and Europe. What we mean by “audience making” is the following: Discourses construct the object of knowledge in a way that they make only certain forthcoming interpretations and modes of reasoning possible. Such discourses create a connotative chain by which members of the public come to identify with the content and the subject-positions that the discourses transmit and aim to pursuit (Weldes, 1996). Moreover, the discursive presentation of policy objectives both reflects and reproduces certain shared beliefs salient to the public and a shared identity that underpins these objectives (Hansen, 2006). While elites construct discourse, discourses also speak through us, through our human agency, and thereby privilege and shape certain ways of apprehending the world. A discursive frame then becomes a deeply structured symbolic apparatus that we use to make sense of the world (Foucault 1971, Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982, Korkut and Eslen-Ziya 2018). According to Mumby and Clair (1997, 202), “this frame provides the fundamental categories in which thinking can take place. It establishes the limits of discussion and defines the range of problems that can be addressed”. There has been ample research on audience making in security studies (Balzacq 2005; Van Rythoven 2015) and what we earlier proposed as “discursive governance” in policy research (Korkut et al. 2015). To contribute to this theoretical literature, we propose to trace how political slogans on migration at the macro-political level seek micro-social deliberations as its audience to affect the everyday politics of Europeanisation.

# Italy – Institutionalised Audience-making to support migration controls:

The Italian case presents an institutionalized exclusionary regime sustained by an emphasis on externalization by political actors despite changing governments.[[1]](#footnote-1) Between 2011 and 2018, Italy has been receiving the highest number of non-EU nationals in its history[[2]](#footnote-2).During this period, two key features in the development of the Italian border management and migration control regime can be identified as the adoption of the ‘hotspot approach’ and the security-driven externalization of border controls. The hotspot approach has been launched shortly before the peak of the European migration crisis as part of the European Agenda on Migration in 2015. It aims at providing assistance to countries with high migratory pressure and coordinating the activities of EU and national authorities at the external borders of the EU. In practice, hotspots are facilities for initial reception, identification, registration and fingerprinting of migrants arriving in the EU by sea, and they have become crucial for the overall Italian asylum system in the areas of first reception and repatriation and for the relocation programme since 2015 (European Parliamentary Research Service 2018).

As for the process of externalization of border controls, it refers to those actions aimed at preventing migrants, including asylum seekers, from entering the territories of destination countries (Frelick, Kysel, and Podkul 2016). Though the Italian externalization strategy has been supported by narratives that are both humanitarian and security-oriented in nature, the security-oriented objective has prevailed even as a condition of humanitarianism.Through externalisation, admission procedures and decisions become no longer confined to the actual physical border, but involve the point of departure – or of transit – as well (Menjívar 2014). In a nutshell, the term externalization refers to “a process that moves the migration control policies beyond the (European) external borders” (Biondi 2012: 149; see also Guild and Bigo 2005).

As part of an externalization strategy, the agreements signed by Italy with countries of origin and transit to prevent irregular immigration and to establish procedure to enforce return have clearly served “as enabling instruments for the Italian push-back policy” (Andrade 2014: 52). Moreover, such a strategy poses important concerns in that cooperation is established with countries where systematic violations of migrants, asylum seekers, and refugee fundamental rights are reported. The externalization strategy depicts a key area where bothsecurity-oriented and humanitariandiscourses are manifest. As a legal expert has commented, the Italian approach to border management in the last few years can be defined as ‘schizophrenic’[[3]](#footnote-3). There have been times of harsh restriction in access to the territory and times of opening, above all for what search and sea rescue operations are concerned. The same definition might apply to the discourses geared for the public debate. As the analysis shows, there has been an alternation of narratives over *humanitarianism* and *securitization* of border management and migration control with a constant emphasis on *solidarity* at the EU level and *externalization* towards African countries.

Narratives of humanitarianism have been focusing on the commitment by the Italian government to save migrants’ lives and protect their human rights. However, the humanitarian discourse is strictly intertwined with that of securitization, which stresses the need to fight against illegal immigration, smuggling of migrants, and terrorism. Indeed, humanitarianism and securitization have often gone hand in hand. Crucial to the analysis of the ‘security-oriented and humanitarian nexus’ is the discourse developed around the Mare Nostrum operation, officially an humanitarian mission launched by the Italian government in 2013 to address the dramatic increase of migration flows in the Strait of Sicily[[4]](#footnote-4). In fact, “although the stress was mainly put on the humanitarian aim of saving lives at sea, Mare Nostrum was also presented […] as a security mission aiming at capturing smugglers. Indeed, besides the thousands of migrants rescued, authorities also boasted about the hundreds of smugglers detained” (Cuttitta 2014: 27).

The security-oriented and humanitarian mix has also characterized the discourse over externalization, which emphasized the need to establish cooperation with – and provide assistance to – North African countries. Decision-makers – from both the center-left and the center-right – have always considered the externalization of border management and migration control as the winning strategy to curb migratory flows. As documented by Cuttitta (2014: 25), a cooperation agreement signed between Italy and Libya in 2003 “was publicly justified with the ‘strong determination’ of both parties to ‘jointly tackle criminal organizations devoted to the smuggling of human beings and the merciless exploitation of clandestine migrants’”. In 2007, another agreement for the joint patrolling of the Libyan coast was presented as necessary to stop smugglers, and therefore to save human lives and disrupt criminal organizations. In 2009, when several push-back operations were conducted by the Italian authorities, “the Italian prime minister described them as ‘an act of great humanity […] because they prevent tragedies at sea’” (2014: 25). These statements provide an example of a mix of security-oriented and humanitarian approaches in border management that focuses on “humanitarian consequences of smuggling and trafficking activities” (2014: 25), without however considering the anti-humanitarian consequences of the restrictive control policies implemented in agreement with North African countries.

In 2013, the then Minister of the Interior Roberto Maroni (Northern League)[[5]](#footnote-5) emphasized the necessity of intensifying the “diplomatic activity towards the countries of origin, primarily with Tunisia, [and] strengthening the relations with other countries, namely Egypt, Morocco and Algeria”[[6]](#footnote-6). With regard to Tunisia, the Minister argued that “cooperation in border surveillance at sea is absolutely important, together with that of repatriation, because it serves to prevent landings, which is always the best thing to do since it makes it possible to save human lives” [[7]](#footnote-7). Similarly, one year later, during a parliamentary committee hearing, the Ministry of the Interior Anna Maria Cancellieri (Independent)[[8]](#footnote-8) stated that the “government efforts to find effective means for combating illegal immigration continue. In this direction, […] bilateral cooperation policy has been given new impetus and collaboration with North African countries, in particular Tunisia and Libya, has therefore been resumed. The need is to ensure greater efficiency in border control, combining it with respect for human rights […]. [This strategy] of cooperation with the Libyan authorities in the field of migration is part of a context that favours […] a preventive approach to the phenomenon with a view to strengthening the capacity of the Libyan police forces in the fight against criminal organizations and better management […] of the migrant population” [[9]](#footnote-9). The overall aim was therefore to help North African countries to ‘work’ better on their territory.

In 2013, the Parliamentary Committee Responsible for Monitoring the Implementation of the Schengen Agreement stated in a report that “with a view to solidarity in the management of external borders, it is necessary and urgent for the European Union to act as a counterpart to bilateral agreements with […] African countries, in order to govern migration flows and to facilitate return policy” (Chamber of Deputies and Senate of the Republic 2013: 20). As also stated in a 2016 Communication of the European Commission, “development and neighbourhood policy tools should reinforce local capacity-building, including for border control, asylum, counter-smuggling and reintegration efforts. All actors – Member States, EU institutions and key third countries – need to work together in partnership to bring order into migratory flows” [[10]](#footnote-10). In particular, “positive and negative incentives should be integrated in the EU's development policy, rewarding those countries that fulfil their international obligation to readmit their own nationals, and those that cooperate in managing the flows of irregular migrants from third countries […]. Equally, there must be consequences for those who do not cooperate on readmission and return”[[11]](#footnote-11). During the same year, in a letter to the Presidents of the European Commission and the European Council – Jean-Claude Juncker and Donald Tusk respectively – the Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi (Democratic Party)[[12]](#footnote-12) emphasized the importance of pursuing an externalization strategy:“the external dimension of migration policies is fundamental for the survival of Schengen and the principle of free movement. The management of migratory flows is no longer sustainable without a targeted and enhanced cooperation with third countries, both of origin and transit”[[13]](#footnote-13).

Furthermore, in 2017, in a letter to the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, the Minister of the Interior Marco Minniti (Democratic Party)[[14]](#footnote-14), remarked that in order to encourage a reduction in migratory flows, “the […] Italian strategy […] focuses [also] on supporting Libyan authorities responsible for border control and flow management. [This strategy] contributes to reducing the risk of accidents and shipwrecks, a risk that can only be eliminated by stopping departures”. In the same letter, the Minister specifies that the activity of the Italian authorities is limited to training, equipment and logistical support of the Libyan Coast Guard, with the aim of preventing “life-threatening crossings and ensuring compliance with international reception standards in Libya”[[15]](#footnote-15). Few months before, in a speech to the Democratic Party Congress, the Minister had stated that “it is a moral duty to welcome those who flee war, those who flee famine, unaccompanied minors: we will always welcome them!”, but also added that “part of this game is played outside national borders, a large part of this problem is in Africa, and we must clearly tell Europe that Africa is the mirror of Europe”[[16]](#footnote-16).

In June 2018, is his inaugural speech to Parliament, the Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte (Independent)[[17]](#footnote-17), has stated that “[w]e defend and will defend immigrants who regularly arrive on our territory, work, fit into our communities, respecting the laws and, indeed, offering a contribution that we consider decisive to the development of the country. But to ensure the indispensable integration we must […] fight with severe determination the most odious forms of exploitation related to trafficking in human beings, perpetrated by unscrupulous smugglers”[[18]](#footnote-18). Moreover, the present government is insisting on the need to purse an externalization strategy. As declared by the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry of the Interior Matteo Salvini (Northern League)[[19]](#footnote-19) during a parliamentary speech, “[w]e are working with Libya […] for the provision of means, […] training, [and] economic support. [However], the problem is not limited to Libya; it is necessary to involve Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco”[[20]](#footnote-20).

Beyond the concurrent narratives and discourses on humanitarianism and securitization, the strategy of externalization of border controls, security objectives certainly outweigh humanitarian aims (Cuttitta 2014). The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Italy and Libya in 2011 emphasized the need to strengthen cooperation in combating smuggling of migrants and terrorism. The same holds for the MoU signed between Italy and Sudan in 2016 and that signed again with Libya in 2017. This is all in line with a general orientation towards a more stringent regulation of the migration phenomenon to reduce the incidence of irregular immigration. More recently, a crucial actor in fuelling the securitization of the migration phenomenon is Matteo Salvini, who has always been stressing the need to defend borders and to block departures from African shores.

In the debate, the narrative – again shared from both the center-left and the center-right – related to the need of solidarity and fair share of responsibilities (burden-sharing)between EU Member States has also played a crucial role. As stated in 2011 by the Ministry of the Interior Roberto Maroni[[21]](#footnote-21), “a system that leaves the individual coastal states of the southern Mediterranean alone to manage unilaterally or bilaterally such important issues as illegal immigration cannot work […]. Italy cannot be the only country that carries out [actions] in all Maghreb countries”[[22]](#footnote-22). Likewise, i in its inaugural speech to Parliament in 2016, the Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni (Democratic Party)[[23]](#footnote-23) declared that “we cannot accept a Europe that is too strict on some aspects of its austerity policies and too tolerant towards countries that do not accept to share common responsibilities on immigration issues”[[24]](#footnote-24). Similar to Maroni and Gentiloni, the current Prime Minister Conte has highlighted that “Europe has allowed selfish closures of many Member States, which have ended up passing on to the border states - and primarily to our country - the burdens and difficulties that should have been shared […]. Italy cannot be left alone in the face of such challenges […]. We therefore want to promote a fairer distribution of responsibilities at European level”[[25]](#footnote-25). This discourse is certainly also linked to the pitfalls of the Dublin Regulation, which have been highlighted by national decision-makers in several occasions.

# Hungary: Exclusionary discourses and restrictive policies

At the outer flanks of Central Europe, the geographical, linguistic and ethnic composition of Hungary has made it an inner outer for Europe in its history. Hungary’s political and cultural elite have presented the nation domestically and internationally as “the last bastion of western Christianity” (Lendvai 2003). This also implied a self-assigned “border” position for the Hungary, which its elite has traditionally exploited in order to accrue political gains at home. In order the political elite has portrayed Hungary as the defender of the European civilization. More recently, “defending Europe despite the West” became the underlying factor in anti-immigrant policies and politics. The Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has stated numerous times that Hungary defends not only the Hungarian border, but also the southeastern border of Europe from *népvándorlás*, that is, “wandering of the people” alluding to the Great wandering of the Peoples in ancient times from East to West. To this extent, Orbán alleges that the “liberal elite” denies the danger that Europe faces, and foregrounds Hungary, once more, as a nation defending Europe. [[26]](#footnote-26)

This narrative is important to understand the evolution of border management practices in Hungary, particularly in the aftermath of the sudden increase in irregular migrant arrivals in 2015. To reflect on Orbán’s self-assigned role to make Hungary Europe’s defender, we will particularly foreground how Hungary interpreted the EU border management regime. In this context, it is important to note how Orbán presented the European “liberal elite” as a hindrance for his defense of EU’s borders, in order to generate audiences for Hungary’s security-oriented border management policies. However, this does not mean that Hungary shuns all measures of protection. As we will discuss later, it has introduced Hungary helps! programme to assist the Middle Eastern Christians.

Since having joined the EU, Hungary’s search for cross-border cooperation in Central-Eastern Europe and “policy of border securitization, which essentially entailed a re-nationalisation of its border regime and its framing of the political border as a protective barrier against threats to national and European identity” (Scott 2018, 19; Lamour and Varga 2017) went hand in hand. To achieve a borderless zone between Hungary and its neighbouring states with Hungarian minorities has been a political objective for Fidesz governments over years (Scott 2018, 25). The Schengen-zone accession of Hungary in 2007, alongside Slovakia and Slovenia, has partially fulfilled this objective. Furthermore, the EU accession of Romania in 2007 and Croatia in 2013 and the removal of Schengen visa obligations from the citizens of Serbia and Ukraine respectively in 2009 and 2017 led Hungary to achieve a free-travel zone in its neighbourhood particularly for its kin. Yet, as the current State Secretary for Parliamentary and Strategic Affairs Bálazs Orbán has indicated, “[Hungarians] do not like borders because it has separated them from one and other, but not because others from us” (Orbán foreword in Baudet 2015: 17). In view of these reflections, one can approach the key developments in Hungary since 2011, but particularly after the end of 2014. As Scott (2018: 26) notes, the period shows how Viktor Orbán’s Fidesz government has exploited borders both “physically and symbolically in ways that resonate with fear of migrants and conservative scepticism of multiculturalism and open borders”. In this very period the Hungarian government appended its politics, policy and narratives of border management to the emergent scepticism with European federalism and multiculturalism apparent amongst the conservative circles in Europe.

What gave Orbán initial ammunition regarding legal and policy changes have been the Charlie Hebdo attacks in Paris in January 2015 as well as the transit refugee flows, particularly from Kosovo but also from the rest of South-eastern Europe, increasing by early 2015 (Szalai and Gőbl 2015). In terms of the policies, one can note five key developments namely the border fence patrolled by armed police and military personnel; surveillance mechanisms, the inadmissibility criteria, the blanket rejection of asylum claimants arriving through Serbia; criminalisation of irregular entry and any activity that facilitates protection and reception of migrants; the forcible removal of undocumented asylum seekers apprehended within 8 km of the border fence, commonly known as “8 km” rule, which was later expanded to encompass the whole territory of Hungary; and finally the establishment of “transit-zone” to submit asylum applications along the Hungarian-Serbian border fence. Hence, what started discursively with the securitization of migration in Hungary soon led to more fundamental legal and policy changes beginning with the government’s announcement that a 175km long fence along the Serbian border and Hungary’s suspending Dublin III regulation by effectively stopping refugees sent back in 2015. A particular mechanism of audience-making has been the *nemzeti konzultáció* (national consultation) mechanism of the government. This operates through letters sent to citizens’ homes asking them to express opinion on issues that the government deems important. These consultations are technically a list of leading questions, and operate almost as referenda without a counter-argument. According to Sámuel Ágoston Mráz, the director of Nézõpont think-tank, national consultation is “like a referendum without alternatives. It is a communication tool to show that you have broad-based support and you can use it against Brussels”.[[27]](#footnote-27) The language used in this consultation was symptomatic of the securitization frame by Fidesz. Furthermore, the government placed billboards all across the country with slogans such as “If you come to Hungary, you need to abide our laws/respect our culture” and “you cannot take away the jobs of Hungarians”. As Szalai and Gőbl note, “the billboards were clearly not targeting migrants, but the general population: they were all in Hungarian and used the informal speech register, which in this context suggests condescension” (Szalai and Gőbl 2015: 24-25). Nagy (2016) considered the developments in this period in Hungary as denial, deterrence, obstruction, punishment, lack of solidarity and breaching domestic, European and international law.

Even if the government could not raise much returns neither through postal nor online channels to its national consultation on migration, it involved itself into more visible expressions of an anti-migrant stance. Kallius, Monterescu, and Rajaram (2016: 27) note the construction of a border fence and transit zones at the border with neighbouring Serbia as well as Croatia to this extent as an attempt to “fabricate the political through processes of marginalisation and exclusion wherein a number of groups have at best a tangential relation to the political norm. Particularly, the creation of transit zones allowed the Hungarian government to culminate securitization of mobility and “fix […] asylum-seekers in time and space and make them invisible to mainstream society” (Scott 2018: 27). Scott continues, “Hungary’s border securitization practices are not only (geo)political but also cultural in nature. Borders are used to position Hungary as a major player in its quest to promote traditional values and as a defender of national sovereignty and identity” (2018: 27).

Furthermore, the border management policies of the government also gained a European dimension as Orbán created an enemy for the Hungarian public in the shape of the liberal politicians of the EU and as its extension the federalist bureaucrats of the European Commission. As we will discuss looking at emerging narratives below, Orbán made it very clear that Hungary was protecting the European borders and that its actions cannot be considered as anti-European. The Hungary’s defiance of the refugee resettlement quota has become the most emblematic of its migration governance and border management in this period.

Paasi states that “understanding borders is inherently an issue of understanding how borders can be exploited to both mobilize and fix territory, security, identities, emotions and memories, and various forms of national socialization” (Paasi 2012: 2307). To this extent, central to the Hungarian border politics has been how to situate Hungary and the Hungarian southern borders to demark the ‘European’ external border. This stance very much originates from the historical position of the Catholic Church against the Ottoman occupiers of the country, who were not only not European, but also Muslim (Pap and Glied 2017). Hence, a security and law-enforcement-focused narrative (Brown and Dadu 2018; Szalai, Csornai and Garai 2017) is widely at play. According to this narrative, the country’s location and proximity to external borders of the EU, and hence its exposure to irregular migration should require a security-oriented response to migration (Szalai, Csornai and Garai 2017, 22). In this context, the Hungarian Prime Minister foregrounded himself almost as a sage to tell the hard truth directly not only to the Hungarian but also to the wider European public using such tropes as ‘migration brings dangers’ and that ‘Hungary will not become a nation of migrants’. Therefore, the security and law enforcement narrative can explain to a certain extent how Orbán politicized migration, and demanded that Europe should construct a hard border against irregular arrivals.

However, beyond the neo-realist approach of the narrative above, following an identity-oriented narrative with constructivist undertones (Szalai, Csornai and Garai 2017; Szalai 2017), Orbán also set a demarcation line internally between the internationalist socialist/liberal elite versus people with national consciousness. He designated a “pro-migration lobby” both at home and in Europe in the shape of NGOs and socialist/liberal politicians, and their alleged external supporter George Soros. Therefore, he sought to undermine humanitarianism and human-rights-oriented narrative (Brown and Dadu 2018) that would primarily safeguard migrants’ rights by associating naivete and foreignness to the practitioners’ actions. Therefore, his overarching narrative has become not only the ‘external other’, but also the ‘internal other’ involved in international networks with the ultimate aim of enfeebling the European culture pose a multifarious danger to the future of European peoples. Below, let us depict three tropes that Orbán circulated extensively in politics and in the public sphere in order to generate audiences for these narratives.

* Hungary defends the European borders:

At any venue possible, Orbán has presented migration as the biggest threat to Europe. In order, for instance, he advised the police at their inauguration ceremony: “You are the protectors of our culture, life style and our sovereignty. Our thousand years of statehood without any doubt give [us] the right for defending our borders, our citizens and our culture.[[28]](#footnote-28) According to Orbán, the new *népvándorlás* or wandering of people would question all that was taken for granted in Europe. He stated:

When we defend our borders, we do not only do something for Hungary, not only protect Hungary’s interests, but the whole, everyone who is behind us, that is, the whole Europe. Those EU member states, which fail to defend the European borders, are the ones that fail to maintain solidarity with the other European Union member states. We expect that they should not allege us with failing the European solidarity and talk about lack of solidarity [when they mention] Hungary.[[29]](#footnote-29)

In this respect, solidarity for Orbán implied taking on the responsibility to protect European external border as against the solidarity assumption that the quota regime would have foreseen to relocate refugees across the EU member states in an equitable manner. In this way, the solidarity that Orbán pursued was not with those in need either. It was with the European publics, who were allegedly threatened with irregular migrants. Therefore, a security-oriented solidarity narrative came to fore as against the solidarity that a humanitarian narrative would have foreseen. As we discussed above, Orbán assumed that the quota referendum in Hungary would have been a major breakthrough for the anti-migration voice in Europe. He gave the following interview at the beginning of the referendum campaign to state their opposition to the introduction of compulsory quota regime.

We, Hungarians, have experienced the threat in earlier times as well and we had the courage to stand against changes. When we stand together, we never fail success. The recognition of threat as it began gave [us] astounding foreign policy cues. We oppose the politically correct migration policy and have decided to stand by the defense of [our] borders. […] With all those that reject the introduction of the compulsory quota regime, I raise one question: Has the European Commission pulled back its quota package: No! In contrast, last week, it has strengthened it. The situation with the bureaucrats in Brussels is the same as those who lost their eye sight: you have to pay attention to their hands not their mouths. We, Hungarians, are one of the committed countries with the European Union. Our commitment to European common future is stronger than ever. This is the very reason why we want to change [the quota system] to defend Europe, which we all love, feel ourselves at home, for which we gave sacrifices.[[30]](#footnote-30)

By the end of 2015, the interior ministers at the European Council agreed to the Commission’s proposal to relocate 120,000 refugees with a majority overriding objections from several Eastern member states. As majority voting did not ensure effective compliance, the Commission President Juncker suggested that further infringement proceedings would be instituted by the Commission. After the defiance of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, in June 2017 the Commission instituted infringement procedures against them for their failure to take “the necessary action” under the 2015 plan (European Commission 2017 in Murray and Longo 2018: 414). The Hungarian response to this was once again to turn to the public in order to create audiences for the anti-migration narrative for Viktor Orbán. A referendum took place in Hungary in 2016 on the EU’s proposed distribution of refugees among EU states. Challenging the Commission, the government asked Hungarian voters if they wanted the Hungarian government to abide by “the mandatory relocation of non-Hungarian citizens to Hungary without the approval of the Hungarian parliament. Although it did not pass, the government’s intention remained and was furthered with key policy changes”.

* We do not want to become a nation of migrants:

As we have argued above, the conservative and radical right question the multiculturalism and internationalism that they associate with the European socialist/liberal circles. Orbán endorsed this position long ago when he depicted the humanitarian stance as a threat to European security. At his presentation for the Future of Europe at the Visegrad 4 conference in January 2018, Orbán stated:

Although in Central Europe, we can talk about migration as a phenomenon emerging after 2015, its positive depiction, support, its evolution into a European item have started long before 2015. This has started not with *willkommenskultur*, but when the United Nations General Secretary gave a presentation at the European Parliament to recommend Europe that migrants will need Europe and Europe will need migrants. Europe should leave its prejudices behind about migration, it needs to open up channels for migrants, and that migration is a solution not a problem. Yet, we do not want to become a nation of migrants. We do not want to see what the migrant communities of Western Europe bring: terror, public insecurities, the feeling of safety and comfort of being at home that the native nations would feel at the face of migration.[[31]](#footnote-31)

It was, in other words, Hungary’s anti-migrant position that allowed its political leaders the chance to establish the most direct link with domestic and European publics. In this context, Orbán argued that an international lobby, composing not only the European Commission but also the United Nations, was at odds with how the ‘natives’ would prefer to run their affairs. He reflected on their humanitarian narrative as being prone to bring insecurities. That is why, Hungary voted against the United Nations Global Compact on Migration in December 2018.[[32]](#footnote-32) Furthermore, Orbán became critical of NGOs that he considered as the alleged domestic accomplices of the international lobby.

* International migration lobby and its domestic partners are against us:

The European Parliament triggered infringement procedures against Hungary for its breach of democratic values with the launch of the so-called Article 7 sanction mechanism in September 2018. In its aftermath, the Hungarian government instigated a new campaign with a “necessary and effective way to get the government’s message across to the Hungarian people”, said Zoltán Kovács, the Prime Minister’s spokesman.[[33]](#footnote-33) The Sargentini report voted at the European Parliament in September 2018, concluded that the Hungarian government’s clampdowns on judicial independence, freedom of expression, minority rights and NGO activities constituted a “systemic risk” to the bloc’s fundamental values. However, Orbán has depicted the Article 7 process as an act of revenge by the European elite intent on punishing Hungary for its vehement opposition to migration and refusal to accept an EU scheme to share refugees.[[34]](#footnote-34)

It is this very European elite, who could not protect Europe from migration. The European elite declared bankruptcy, and the symbol of this bankruptcy is the European Commission. […] The good news is that the days of the European Commission is numbered. […] We are glad that their days are numbered. We ask ourselves the question why the European elite, which is an exclusively liberal elite, declared bankruptcy. […] Because they have rejected their roots, and instead of Christian Europe they looked for building a Europe of open society. […] In Europe of open society, there are no borders. The European people can be exchanged with migrants. […] The nation, the national identity and national feeling are negative and considered as dying, and the state does not guarantee security in Europe.[[35]](#footnote-35)

The security-oriented narrative, however, should not mean that humanitarianism has been fully ignored by the Hungarian politicians. Despite securitizing refugee reception and building “transit-zones” composed of container camps at the Serbian border, the Hungarian leaders still sought to create an image of their country as a “protector” of Europe and Middle Eastern Christians. For them, it was the European Christians that needed to protection within in Europe. Outside Europe, however, minority Christians of the Middle East became the main thrust of Hungary’s humanitarianism and subsequent protector image. In order, Hungary has started the “Hungary Helps!” program in 2017 in order the support the persecuted Christians in the Middle East. The pillars of the program, according to the state secretary in charge Azbej Tristan, were immediate action and sincerity. According to the state secretary, “Hungary is unashamedly proud of its Christian cultural foundations and it builds its national and foreign policy following these foundations.” The government tried to avoid the mistake that many international aid organizations has made. The Hungarian government did not decide on anyone’s behalf, but instead went to the Middle East to see how they can help those in need.[[36]](#footnote-36)

**- Conclusion:**

Following Mumby and Clair (1997), in our discussion, we looked into how narratives and discursive frames seek audience as they limit and define the range of discussion. Looking at Italy and Hungary, and Europeanisation and migration debates, we have argued that though they depict macro-political goals and aims, policy and political narratives on security and humanitarianism would seek to affect micro-social debates. Our two cases present two different mechanisms of substantiating our argument. In Italy references to concrete policy measures to adopt are more conspicuous than they are in Hungary. In Italy, the dominant narratives have revolved around the need to save migrants' lives and protect their human rights (humanitarianism) and to combat illegal immigration, smuggling of migrants, and terrorism (securitization). These narratives have gone hand in hand with policy demands pointing at a humanitarian-securitarian nexus. In Hungary there is an ideational making of migration politics aligned with securitization-oriented policy mechanisms for border controls. The protection mechanism for Hungary is extra-territorial and selective while for irregular migrants the policy remains security-oriented. In justifying the newly implemented border control measures, the government discursively operationalised religion, and Hungary’s historical past and freedom fighting traditions in order to facilitate the positive public acceptance of its political agenda. The dehumanisation of migrants, their discursive representation as threat to Hungary’s religious and national identity, and territorial integrity foregrounded national security objectives, and simultaneously marginalised humanitarian concerns with the aim to invalidate sentiments of solidarity. Considering these two EU border states’ position on external migration and the audience-making for micro-social levels, we can state that both institutionalised and discursive means play a crucial role exploiting the everyday feelings that migration would stimulate considering its security and humanitarianism aspects.

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