



FACULTY OF INTERNATIONAL
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FATIGUE

The mythology of Law and Justice's (PiS) migration discourse

International student conference "European politics and migration", 08.02.2019, Krakow

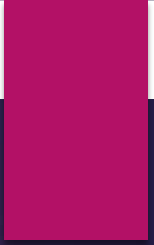
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*This research is part of a project that has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 765224.



“We should carefully study the origin, the structure,
the methods, and the technique
of the political myths.
We should see the adversary face to face
in order to know how to combat him.”

- ERNST CASSIRER, “THE MYTH OF THE STATE”

Analytical lens

- ▶ Myth - a special form of thinking and as an expression of collective emotions (Cassirer, Eliade)
- ▶ Always uses a certain group of people as the hero or protagonist (Tudor)
- ▶ A fundamental feature is the emotional bias (Boticci):

“If a myth reflects a truth, it is primarily a truth of emotions. A real myth can never be a pure intellectual creation, a living myth must be expressed emotionally.”

- ▶ As long as something in reality has a sense, a higher purpose, meaning, is ascribed values – it has traces of a myth. (Kołakowski)

Analytical lens

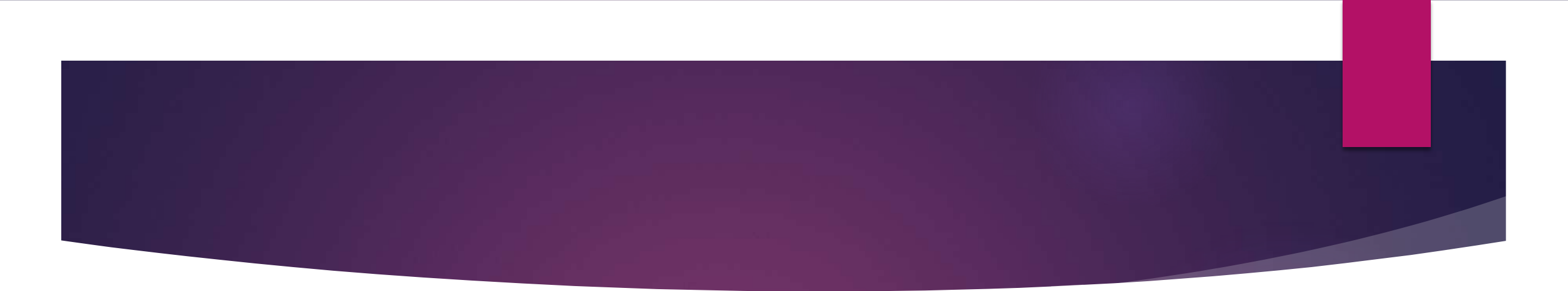
- ▶ “Myth is made according to plan. The new political myths do not grow up freely; they are not wild fruits of an exuberant imagination. They are artificial things fabricated by very skilful and cunning artisans”

- Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State*

Basic functions of myth

- ▶ 1) the consolatory function - to give meaning and hope, to overcome grief and suffering
- ▶ 2) the integrating function - to create the feeling of belonging to a group, apart from other people
- ▶ 3) the mobilising function - to activate collective memory and to call for repetition of deeds

By Törnquist Plewa after Cassirer and Kołakowski

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- ▶ “The magic word has a predominant and overwhelming influence. It does not describe things or relations of things; it tries to produce effects and to change the course of nature”

- Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State*

Myth in PiS migration discourse: SECURITY

- ▶ “The most important is the security of Poland and Poles”
- ▶ “After recent events related to acts of terror we will not accept refugees, because there is no mechanism, which would ensure security”
- ▶ Prime Minister Beata Szydło has firmly stated today that in the matter of refugees, Poland will not allow to be intimidated by the European Commission.
The security of the region, Poles and the Visegrad Group is our priority and we will never agree to blackmail and dictating such conditions.”

Myth in PiS migration discourse: US vs THEM

- ▶ 'us' or 'self' – PiS government, by extension Poland
'extended self' - Visegrad 4, sometimes wider Central and Eastern Europe or new EU Member States who struggle against
- ▶ 'them' – “old EU”, Western European countries, or “Brussels elites”
who are perceived to protect their interest at the cost of the new members

Myth in PiS migration discourse: Demonizing the EU

- ▶ “Attempts to force joint responsibility for the decision on the opening of borders, which Angela Merkel has taken in an authoritarian manner and in violation of all EU procedures, is a complete mistake of Brussels.”
- ▶ “This propaganda about success [of relocation programs] from the European Commission... for many people it was a wake up call showing the hypocrisy of the Brussels elites.”
- ▶ “...at the level of media and society [in Germany] there is a constant nonsensical attack on Poland and supporting the opposition...The claim that the German government does not have any influence over the media is a claim, to put it mildly, detached from reality”

Myth in PiS migration discourse: Demonizing the EU

- ▶ “Poland ... has become a comfortable "whipping boy". The decision makers of the "old EU", irritated by Poland's strong opposition to the forced relocation of refugees in our country, imposed on us unfavorable rhetoric in their national media, which in turn has a clear impact on sentiments in the society. As a consequence, in the societies of the "old EU" the antipathy to our country persists or is even growing...
- ▶ A strong EU is Poland's interest - but not the EU polarized between the "poor relatives from the East" and the "old elite"

Myth in PiS migration discourse: Demonizing the EU

- ▶ “...by [not] accepting the forced relocation of migrants, we win the security of our own citizens. People in Poland, in public places, feel safe. At least a lot safer than in Western Europe. They do not live in fear that every night out on the beach or an evening walk can end in a tragedy.”
- ▶ “We show that you can pursue a different policy and live without fear of terrorist attacks. This is an example for the leaders of some countries that are so dangerous, that regardless of the invocation of reality, the frustration of societies affected by these misfortunes is growing. They look at the map and see where it is different. And they ask – how come they can live there normally? In the name of what do we give away our security, the shape of European civilization? I often hear such voices... I hear admiration for Poland that was able to say "no" to bad projects, that we are today a beautiful, safe, attractive country.”

Myth in PiS migration discourse: a threat to nation's sovereignty

- ▶ "Such a decision would abolish the sovereignty of the weaker Member States of the European Union. We cannot agree to this. We must oppose, because we are and will be masters in our own land."
- ▶ "Sovereign states must have the ability to decide who they accept"
- ▶ "We take the position that all EU countries have a duty to guarantee full sovereignty of borders and that we, the Republic of Poland, decide who we want to accept, whom we want to accept temporarily, and whom we do not want to accept"
- ▶ "The policy of pressure from the European Union is being applied. We can not give in to it."

Myth in PiS migration discourse: The hero of Poland and Poland as hero

- ▶ “As Poland, from the very beginning we have consistently and with great courage raised [this question] and we were not afraid to start discussions on this subject [relocation mechanism]. The entire Visegrad is of such opinion at the moment.”
- ▶ “As long as I am Prime Minister, there will be no Polish consent to this [refugee relocation]. They [the EU] will not break us”
- ▶ “If it were not for the Government of Law and Justice and a tough policy in this matter, the Poles would not feel safe today”

Myth in PiS migration discourse: The enemy of the people - PO

- ▶ [Platforma Obywatelska (PO) government accepted EU relocation] “against the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, against the V4 countries”
- ▶ “PO is not a party that would be able to conduct a sovereign migration policy and a sovereign policy towards the EU, to present Polish arguments in Brussels.”

Myth in PiS migration discourse: The enemy of the people – Tusk

- ▶ “the candidacy of Donald Tusk is convenient from the point of view of Western countries that want to get rid of immigrants... He behaved as if he was a very loyal functionary of the European Union, who pursues German interests. Chancellor Merkel is now pushing Donald's candidacy...”
- ▶ “High treason ... refers to the most serious crime that can be committed. But, gentlemen, it is necessary to recall what Donald Tusk has done with the idea of punishing countries opposing the admission of refugees with the fine of 250,000 euros per person.”
- ▶ “...as the head of this body [the European Council], he does not focus on solving the migration problem, but on the fighting the Polish government and the Hungarian government”

Myth in PiS migration discourse: the promise of salvation

- ▶ “Together, we can influence the fate of Europe”
- ▶ “The fact that the decision to relocate immigrants has not been extended, but is dying a natural death, is for Poland above all a sign that the European Commission is not deaf to the arguments of the Visegrad Group. Patiently repeated arguments brought the expected results...”
- ▶ “I am glad that the President of the European Council is starting to speak like Poland in the context of refugees”

Myth in PiS migration discourse: alternative solidarity

- ▶ “We want to help, but there on the spot”
- ▶ “We owe the truth to those who died in Auschwitz...Referring to the situation in the Middle East, she reminded that people in a war-torn country need to be helped but on the spot...You have to create a decent living environment for them. The current European Union policy towards refugees is not effective...We wonder if this is the way that will really help refugees, if it is not better - as Poland is doing right now - to help there on the spot, like when we get involved providing medical help ...our country is involved, among others in the construction of hospitals.”

Myth in PiS migration discourse: conclusions

- ▶ An overwhelming appeal to emotion, and very little appeal to rationality
- ▶ The central conflict: US (Poland) vs them (EU)
- ▶ PiS and Poland are heroes, protagonists
- ▶ Refugees are a security threat, antagonists
- ▶ EU is an usurper, antagonist
- ▶ Migration policy – a zero-sum game, realist approach
- ▶ PO and Tusk – enemies of the people
- ▶ Alternative solidarity
and the promise of salvation to Poland, and Europe, and refugees

Thank you! Dziękuję!